FROM THE CREATOR OF *DEADMAN WONDERLAND*

LIVINGSTONE

1

STORY BY
TOMOHIRO MAEKAWA

ART BY
JINSEI KATAOKA





Story:
Tomohiro Maekawa

Manga:
Jinsei Kataoka

1





Chapter 1: Cleaning and Collection 5

Chapter 2: A Waste of Justice 63

Chapter 3: Game Start 121

Chapter 4: Flowchart 153

Chapter 5: Cheat Code 185

Chapter 1 Cleaning and Collection

Huff.

Huff.

Huff.

Huff.

Huff.

Huff.

Huff.

HELLO, IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.

AND NOW YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF WITH A RAZOR.

RIGHT ?

YOU STARTED WORKING FOR OTA ENGINEERING AFTER YOUR DIVORCE THREE YEARS AGO.

YOU'RE KENJI SHINDO-SAN, AGE 36. BLOOD TYPE A.

WE'RE HERE...

...TO SAVE

...TO KILL

YOU.

90% of a person's life is predeter-mined.

...much like our genes, these are all laid out...

RUN! RUN!

カキィン
KA-CRACK

How we live, how we die...

...by our soul's "plan".

OH, YUCK.

whisper

whisper

THERE'S ONE IN EVERY TOWN.

SIGN:
Stone Shop
For all your
stone needs.

...HEY, DAD.

I WON'T ASK YOU TO MAKE THE SHOP CUTE, OR STYLISH, OR ANYTHING,

BUT COULD WE AT LEAST MAKE IT A LITTLE LESS... YOU KNOW...

HEY, WHAT TOOK YOU, SAKURAI?

OH!

THUP

BLUP

BLUP

I MAKE A PRETTY DECENT PROFIT.

LABEL: Ponzu

GLUP GLUP GLUP

IS THAT SO?

LABEL: Sweet Potato Shōchū

...THIS SHOP NEVER FAILS TO IMPRESS ME.

THIS FLAVOR IS EXHILIRATING! IT MOVED ME MORE THAN THE FIRST TIME I CHUGGED SOY SAUCE.

はHA

はHA

はHA

SEE THIS HERE? IT'S GOOD STUFF.

...UH, NO, THANKS, TOKIEDA-SAN.

I APPRE-CIATE THE OFFER, BUT... THIS JOB *IS* URGENT, ISN'T IT?

BE-
SIDES,
OUR
JOB IS...

AW, COME ON, SAKURAI! YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT TAKING YOUR JOB TOO SERIOUSLY.

...WELL, WHAT-EVER.

WHISTLE RUSTLE

THIS IS THE NEGATIVE POINT I WANT YOU TO CLEAN UP THIS TIME.

A STUDIO APART-MENT IN THIS COMPLEX.

A 36-YEAR-OLD MAN'S

BEEN LIVING THERE FOR ABOUT SIX YEARS.

NAME: KENJI SHINDŌ
GENDER: MALE AGE: 36
ADDRESS: 160-0745 TOKYO-TO SHINJU
PHONE NUMBER: 03-3798-14
MOBILE PHONE: 0

...HE HASN'T SHOWN UP TO WORK IN FOUR DAYS.

THAT'S NOT GOOD. SIX YEARS...

...IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO DERAIL HIS SOUL'S PLAN.

...!

HEY.

WHAT IS THAT?

WRITING: Bug-Eye

THAT'S WHAT THAT OLD GUY TOLD ME.

SO, SEE?

THIS?

WHEN SOMETHING DIES, ITS SOUL TURNS INTO A STONE.

OUR GOLDFISH DIED.

401

WE HAVE TO HELP HIM!

THERE'S NO TIME.

HURRY! WE HAVE WORK TO DO!

AMA- NO- KUN!

NOW, LOOK ...

...

THIS IS BUG- EYE'S SOUL.

I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD TO KILL YOURSELF.

NAH. NOT THIS GUY.

HIS FACE IS ALL LIKE, "NOPE!"

I SAY IF HE'S READY TO GO, LET HIM GO.

CAN'T YOU TRY JUST A LITTLE HARDER AT LIFE?

...ESPECIALLY AT SUCH A CRITICAL TIME IN HIS LIFE!

I-I'LL CALL THE POLICE!

WAIT A MINUTE... WHO THE HELL ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

YOU CAN'T JUST BARGE INTO A GUY'S HOME WITHOUT TAKING YOUR SHOES OFF!

...

NO, I...

ER.

RUMBLE

LET'S SEE...

ペコリ BOW

I'M SORRY, I FORGOT TO INTRODUCE MYSELF.

MY NAME IS SAKURAI.

...!

Psycholith Collection & Cleaning

SHŌZŌ SAKURAI

ADDRESS:
27-0741 TOKYO-TO SHINJUK
MINAMI-SAKAE 5-

PHONE:
090-3

HERE'S MY CARD.

Psycholith Collection & Cleaning

SO,

IN SHORT ...

IT MEANS "SOUL STONE".

...

PSYCHO ...LITH?

チャプン splish

NO.

I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S TO KILL HIM.

MY JOB

IS TO SAVE YOU.

RUMMAGE

AMANO-KUN!

BE QUIET! DON'T MAKE THINGS ANY MORE COMPLI-CATED!

WHICH IS IT?!

AH— HEY!

IT'S RUDE TO TAKE PEOPLE'S PICTURES WITHOUT WARNING THEM!

BUT YOU WERE TAKING FOREVER.

カシャ SNAP

?!

whrr

JUST LOOK AT HIS SOUL, WILL YA?

35...

THAT IS FAR TOO CHEAP FOR A FLOOR PLAN LIKE THIS.

HUH?

35 THOU-SAND YEN* ...

HOW MUCH IS THE RENT?

BUT MAN, THIS PLACE IS FILTHY.

AND IT REEKS.

SOUL ...?

*35,000 Yen = About $350

?
?
HEY!
YEAH, YEAH.
I SUPPOSE WE'LL WANT TO CLEAN FIRST.
IF YOU'D BE SO KIND, AMANO-KUN.

WHOA.

THERE'RE *STAINS* EVERY-WHERE.

murmer

SQUIRM

murmer

SQUIRM

gy-gyoo!

gyoo!

THEY'RE BREED-ING.

toss

gya!

キーン

KA-POP

ghee!

ビチ FLAIL

ghee?!

ビチ FLAIL

RATTLE

RATTLE

♫

gyoo!

FSHH

ghee?!

gyoo!

gyoo!

70 FSHH

PSH

GLOOOW...

THIS IS WHAT WE CALL A "NEGATIVE POINT".

YOU HEAR ABOUT THEM ALL THE TIME. FOR EXAMPLE...

OR A STRAIGHT ROAD WHICH SEES AN INEXPLICABLY LARGE NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS.

A TUNNEL WHERE PEOPLE KEEP DYING FOR SOME REASON.

AND THOSE SHATTERED SOULS DRAG OTHER SOULS DOWN WITH THEM.

THOSE ARE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE'S SOULS WERE SHATTERED IN "UNPLANNED" ACCIDENTS.

...JUST AS *YOU* WERE DRAGGED INTO *THIS* NEGATIVE POINT.

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 52%

YOUR PLAN FIDELITY RATE HAS DROPPED ALL THE WAY DOWN TO 52%.

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 52%

THE SOUL IS LIKE THE GENETIC CODE OF A PERSON'S LIFE.

IT HAS A "PLAN" THAT PREDETERMINES 90% OF THAT LIFE.

THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT— OR A MURDER—IN THIS APARTMENT.

LIVING HERE FOR SIX YEARS HAS THROWN YOU WAY OFF COURSE...

...SUICIDE IS NOT A PART OF YOUR SOUL'S PLAN.

WHO WOULD EVER BELIEVE THAT CRAP?

SOUL? PLAN?

...WHA?

ARE YOU RELIGIOUS RECRUITERS OR SOMETHING?

BUT ...

SOULS DO EXIST.

IT'S ALWAYS SO HARD TO EXPLAIN.

If only there were a manual or something.

...

I KNOW.

...I HAVE A STORY FOR YOU.

He took a patient who was dying of tuberculosis and put him on a scale.

The American physician Duncan Macdougall performed a certain unthinkable experiment.

1907, the turn of the 20th century.

The scale measured a very slight loss in weight— three fourths of an ounce*.

Three hours and forty minutes later,

the instant the patient breathed his last…

*About 21g

Accord-ing to his subsequent experi-ments,

the average came to about 30 g.

APPARENTLY, THAT IS THE WEIGHT OF A SOUL.

...OF A PSYCHO-LITH.

fip

IT'S PRETTY CRUSHED UP.

THE STAINS ARE ALL CLEANED UP.

LOOK INSIDE.

RATTLE...

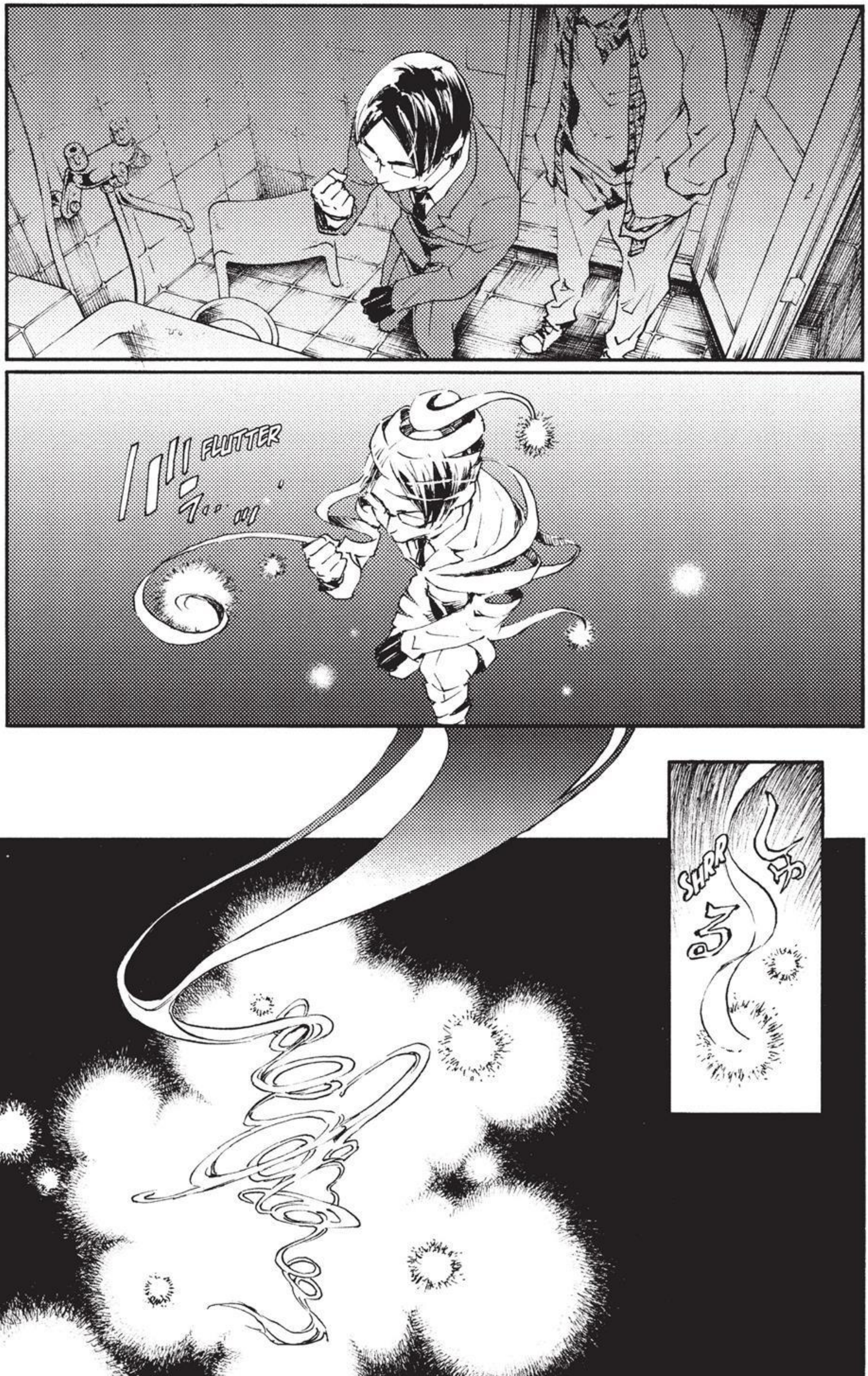
PSY-CHO-LITH ...?

THIS.

I HATE LOOKING AT THESE...

CLATTER...

CLENCH


FLUTTER
SHRR

SHRRRR

I'M... SORRY ...

MOM... ...MY

I'M

SOR

I'M SORRY!

WHAM

I'M SORRY!

BAM

I'M SORRY

I'M SORRY

I'M I'M SORRY!

I'M SOR

I'M SOR

I'M SORRY!

I'M SORRY!


BOO
OM
TWITCH
TWITCH

CLATTER

...NGH!

...WELL?

HUFF.

HUFF ...

WHEW...

WHEW!

...

THAT'S WHAT WAS CAUS-ING THE STAINS.

ABUSED ...AND KILLED, APPAR-ENTLY.

...IT'S A CHILD.

...HEY.

AND HER PSYCHO-LITH WAS SMASHED TO PIECES...

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN FIVE OR SIX YEARS OLD...

...THE POOR GIRL.

GIVE ME A BREAK.

THAT'S A SOUL ...?

IT'S JUST A ROCK.

NO...

NO, IT ISN'T.

THIS IS A SOUL.

AND THIS...

...IS PROOF OF THAT.

...THAT GIRL LIVED.

...

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

OR NOT?

SO?

YOU GONNA DIE?

SO LET'S NOT DO THAT, OKAY?

YOU CAN TRY A LITTLE HARD-ER...

TO, UM...

... SUICIDE IS NOT PART OF YOUR PLAN.

...

splash

...HA.

I MEAN, WHY NOT?

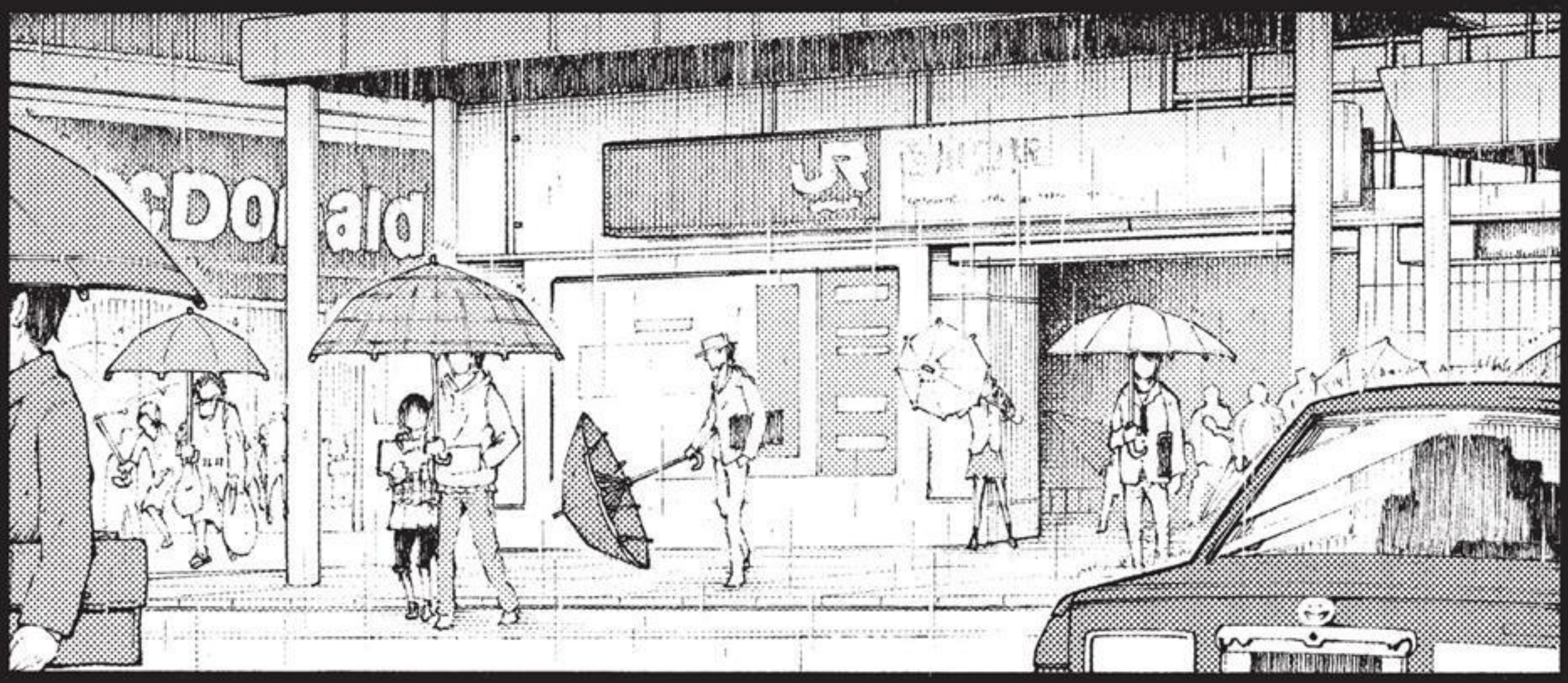
NO, I THINK I'LL DIE.

AND I'LL ESCAPE MY CRAPPY BOSS AND MY CRAPPY JOB.

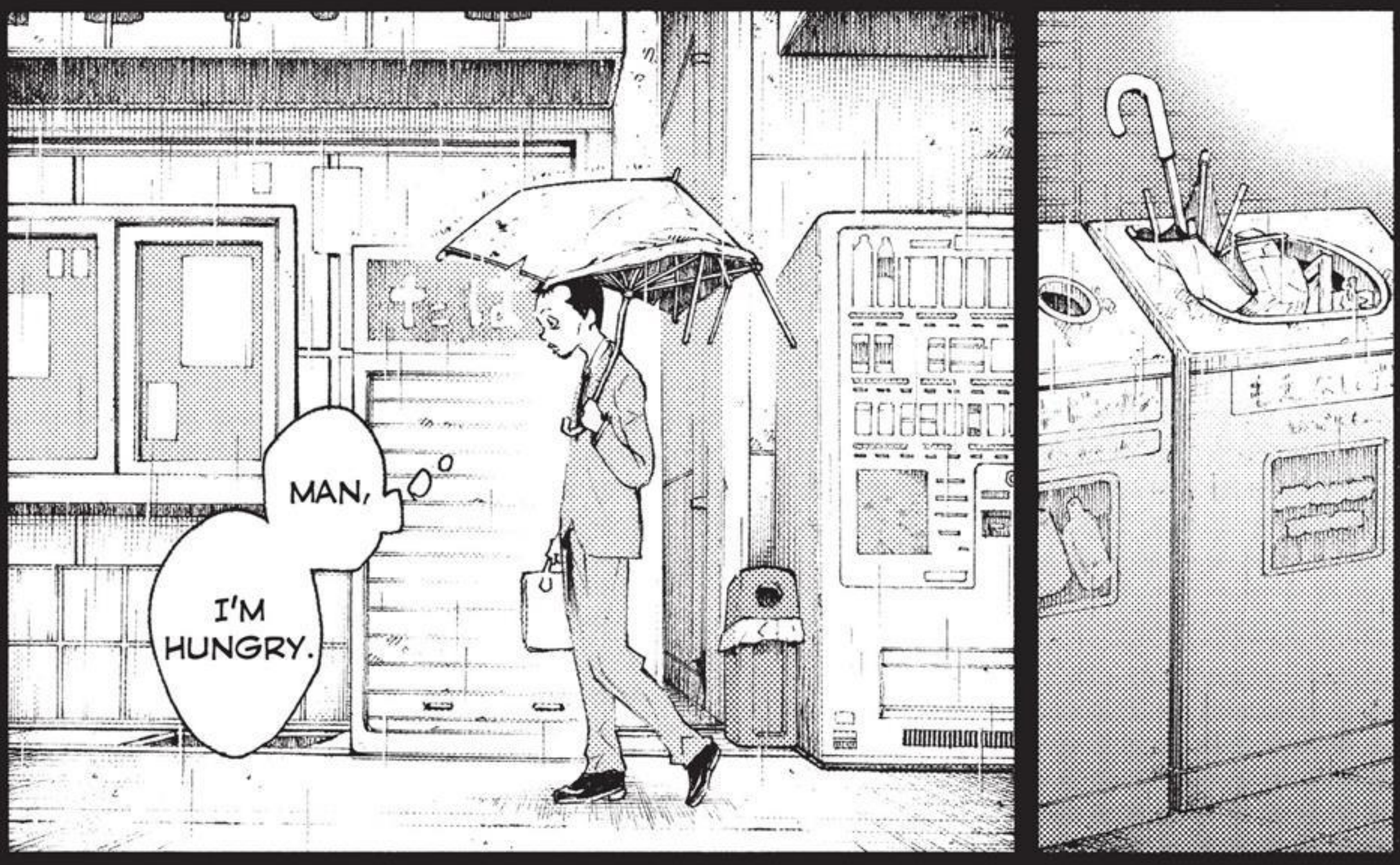
I'LL ESCAPE THE FACT THAT MY GIRL RAN OUT ON ME...

IF I DIE, I'LL ESCAPE MY LOTTERY-SIZED DEBTS...

NOTHING'S EVER GONE MY WAY. NOT ONCE.


JR


glance
glance
ZSHHH


MAN, I'M HUNGRY.

DID I EAT YESTER-DAY?

SIGN: Convenience Store Takayoshi

THAT WILL BE 672 YEN*.

BEEP

*About $6.72

...

I'M SORRY, UM...

ON SECOND THOUGHT, DON'T BOTHER.

...

SHOULD I HEAT THAT UP FOR YOU?

UH... YEAH.

UM... SIR.

...

APRON: Convenience Store Takayoshi

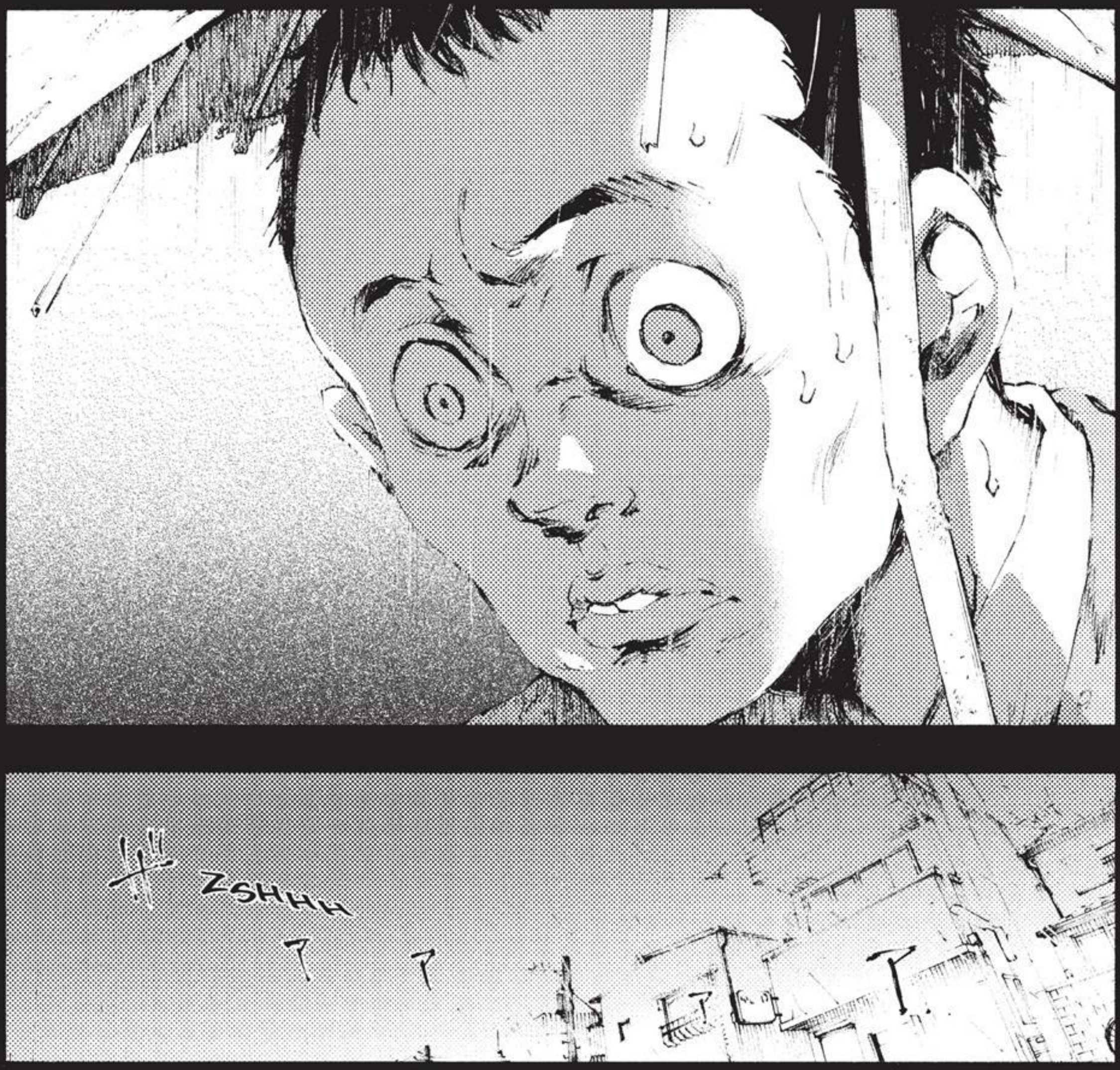
SO IF YOU WANT IT...

whisper

I WAS JUST GONNA THROW THIS OUT ANYWAY.

SPLASH

SPLASH



...

...DAMN IT.

...AND THEN I WAS BLESS-ED WITH A BOX LUNCH.

...

A BOX LUNCH?

?

401

HOW'D IT COME TO THAT?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

I'LL SHOW THEM ALL...

...BUT YOU KNOW WHAT?

EVEN A GUY LIKE ME IS FREE TO CHOOSE WHEN HE DIES!

IT WILL DRAG SOME-ONE ELSE ALONG WITH IT.

IF YOUR SOUL BREAKS IN THIS APARTMENT,

AN UN-PLANNED DEATH WILL DAMAGE YOUR SOUL.

...OUR JOB IS TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING.

... WELL.

LOOKS LIKE HE'S READY TO GO.

SAKU-RAI.

...BY TAKING APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO "KILL" YOUR PRESENT BODY.

OKAY?

WE WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO "SAVE" YOUR PSYCHO-LITH AND KEEP IT INTACT...

WELL...I THINK I GET IT... BUT I'M NOT SURE.

IF THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU...

WE'LL NEED YOUR SOUL'S PERMIS-SION.

... PER-MIS-SION ?

...UM.

GOOD LUCK... IN YOUR NEXT LIFE.

YOU KNOW, LIKE A SIGNAL. TO LET US KNOW YOU'RE OKAY WITH DYING.

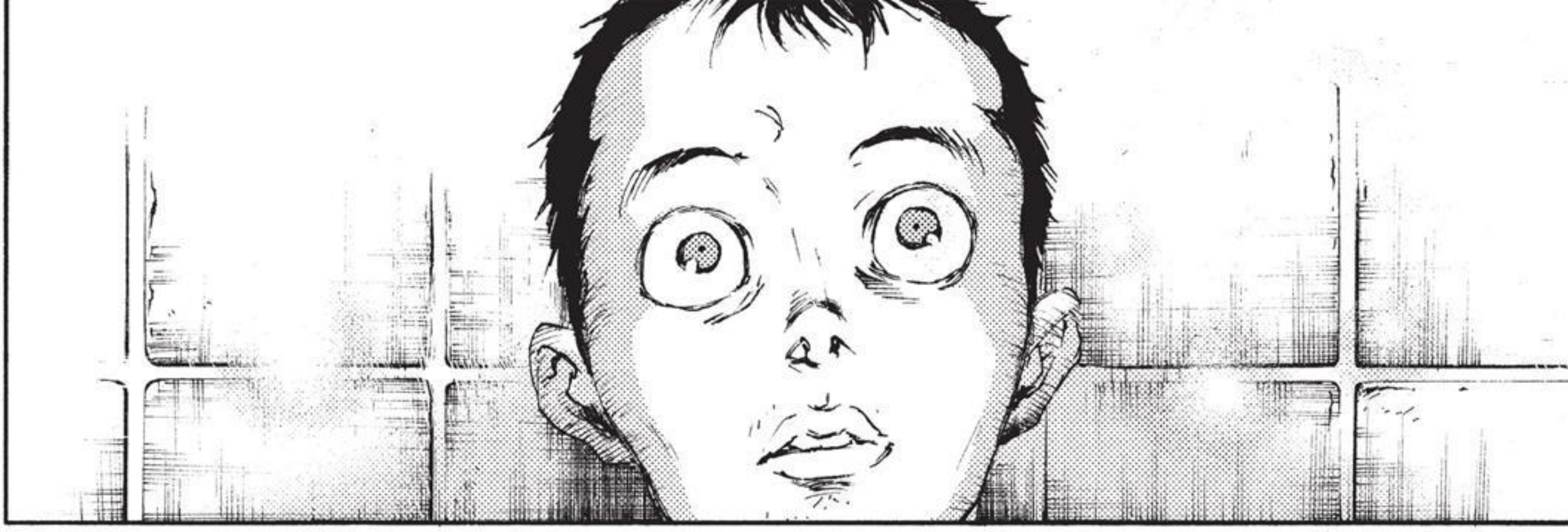
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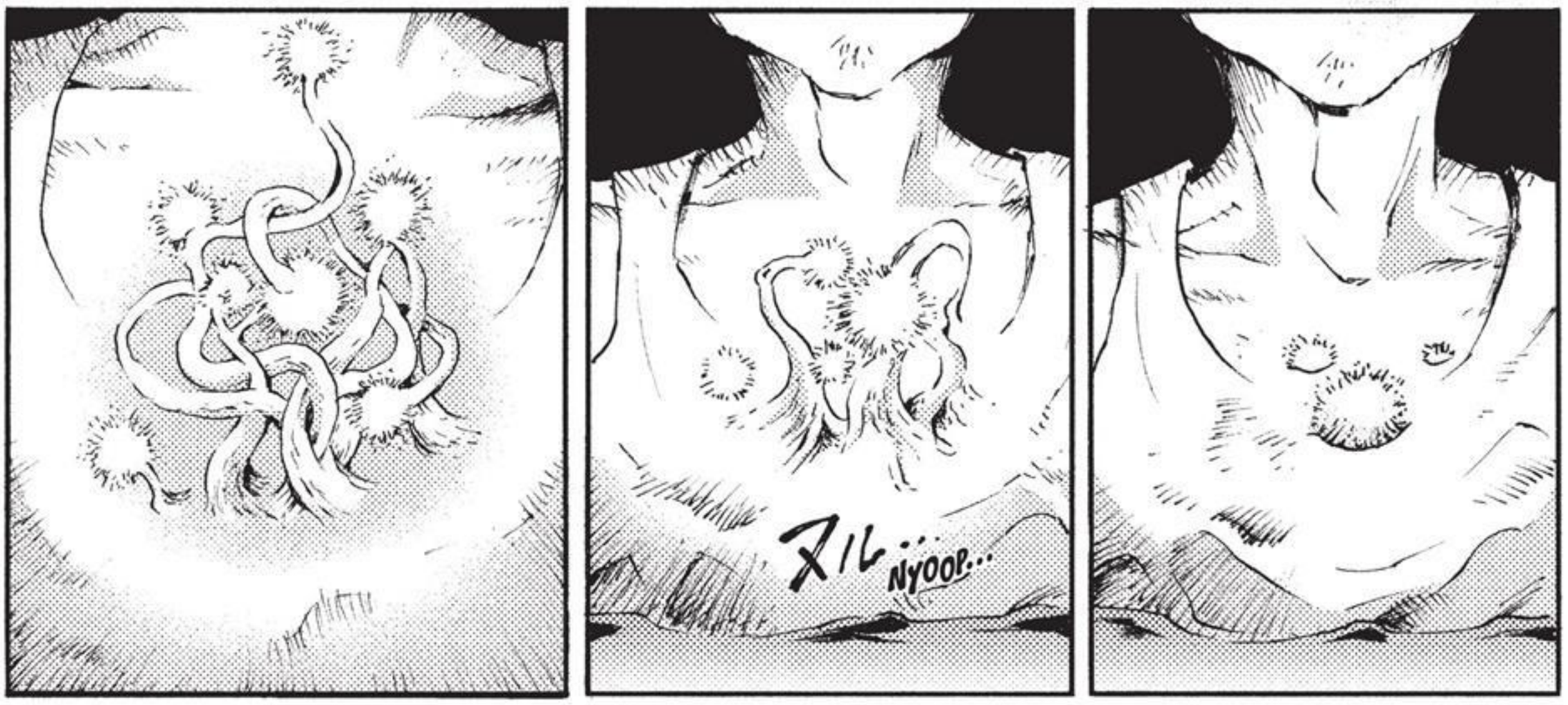
THANKS FOR YOUR BUSI-NESS.

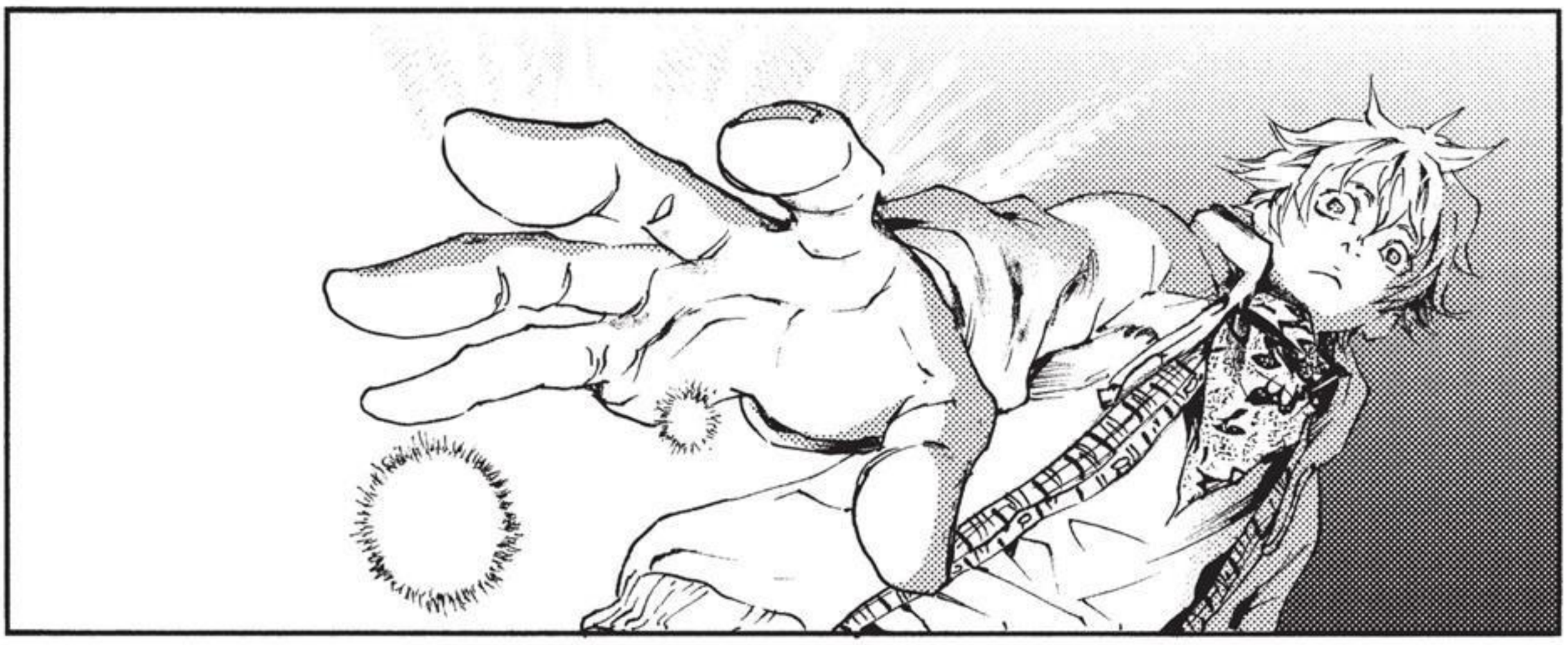
sff

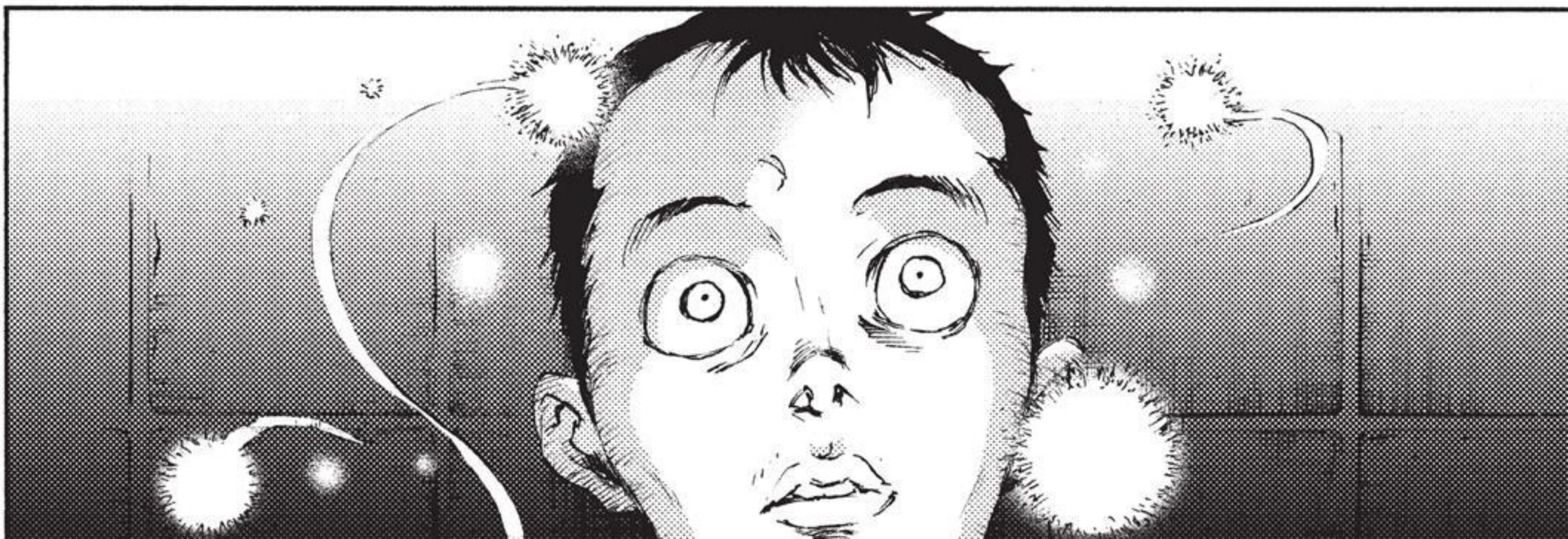
HEH. IS THAT REALLY HOW THIS WORKS?

OKAY, I LIKE IT.




ZIL
NYOOP...







splish

CATCH

...WELL, MY JOB'S DONE.

HAVE FUN TAKING CARE OF THE BODY.

IT'S LUMPY.

The soul is like the genetic code of a person's life.

90% of a life is already decided. That is the soul's "plan".

When a soul strays from the plan, it shatters, and leaves its pieces in this life.

When life ends according to its plan, the soul grows and moves on to its next life.

Those pieces create an area of negative energy, which in turn disrupts the plans of the people in that spot.

...IT'S COLD.

brr...

We discard this life for the sake of the next... I wonder if that's a good thing.

It is essential that we prevent the loss in souls caused by this vicious cycle. We must take custody of these souls, and manage them so they can grow.

And so, when it is impossible to put the plan back on course, our only choice is to discard the flesh that tethers the soul to its current life.

WHO ARE YOU?

...HUH?

To be honest, I don't know what this thing that we call a soul is exactly.

EX-CUSE ME.

splish

...THIS CONTAINER COULDN'T HAVE LASTED MUCH LONGER ANYWAY.

SPLITCH

!!!

But I'm sure that it's the soul... that makes a person a person.

...IT'S ALL RIGHT.

YOU'VE BEEN SAVED.

HUH?

ONE

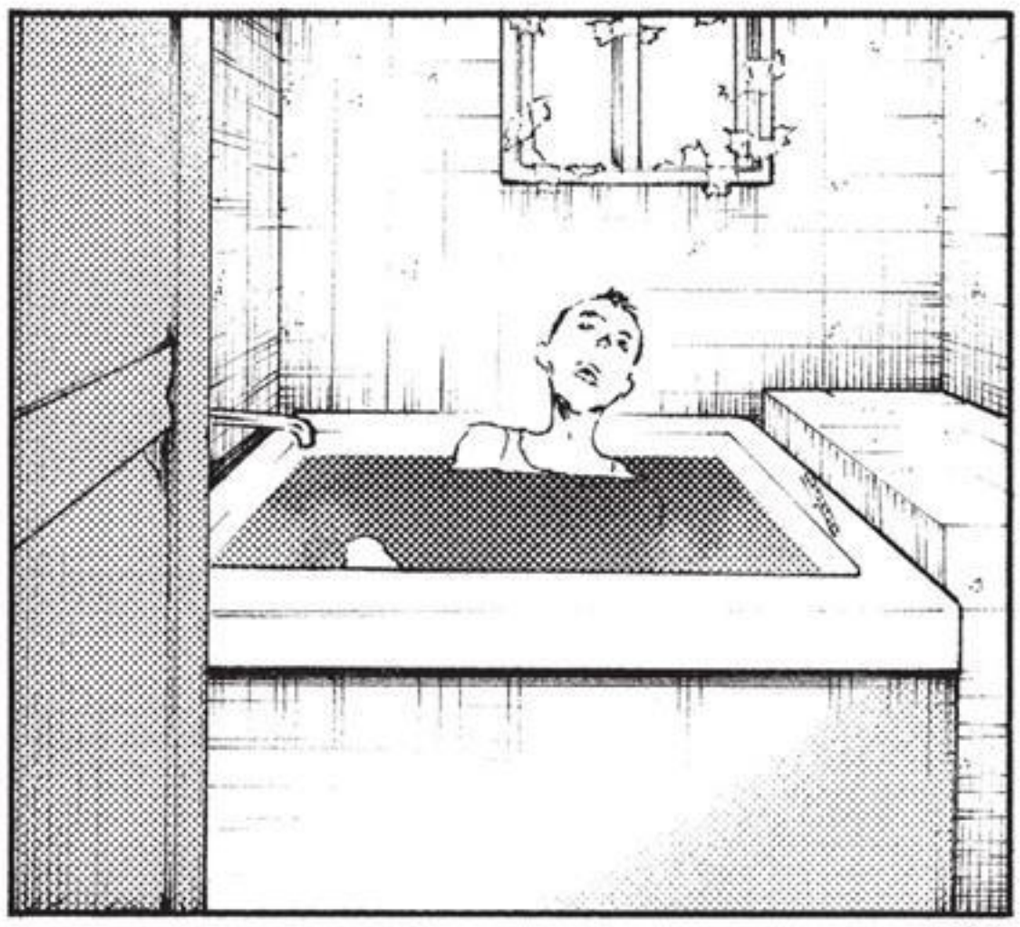
SEE? THAT DIDN'T HURT.

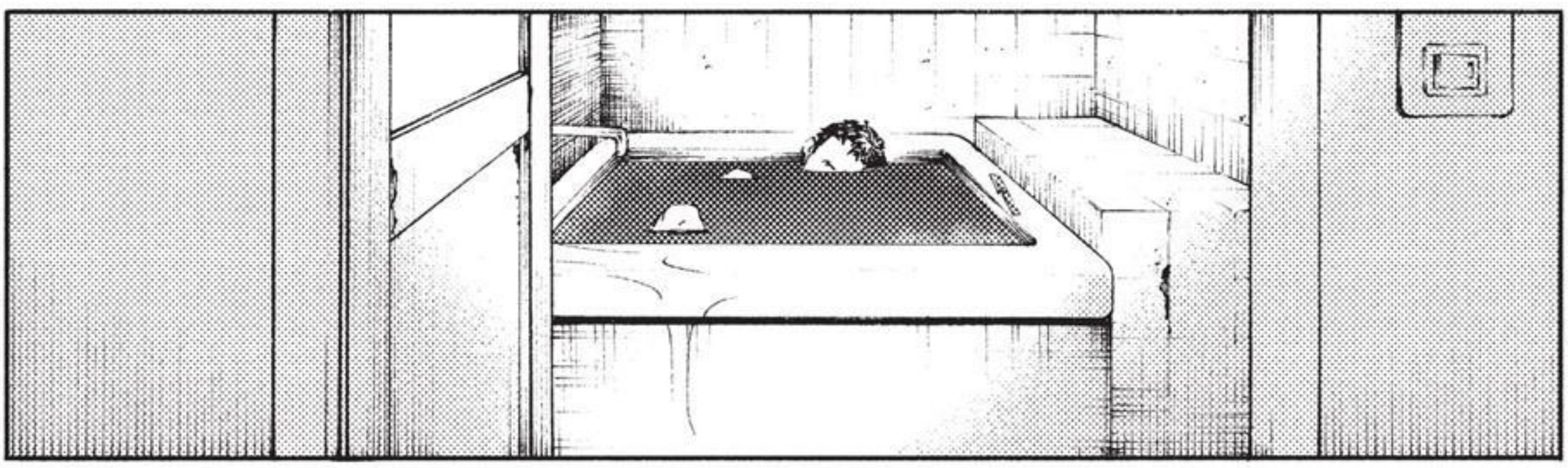
OH.

THANKS.

splish









THANKS FOR BRING-ING IT IN.

NOT THAT I'M SUR-PRISED, BUT YOU LOOK TERRIBLE.

SWOOSH

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

はぁ sigh

...

I'M YOUNG.

YEOWCH!

KONK!!!

NOTH-ING.

You're making me mad!

EXCUSE ME, AMANO-KUN!

WHAT DID YOU JUST KICK AT ME?

I'M BORED. CAN I GO HOME?

Can I?

WRITING: Bug-Eye

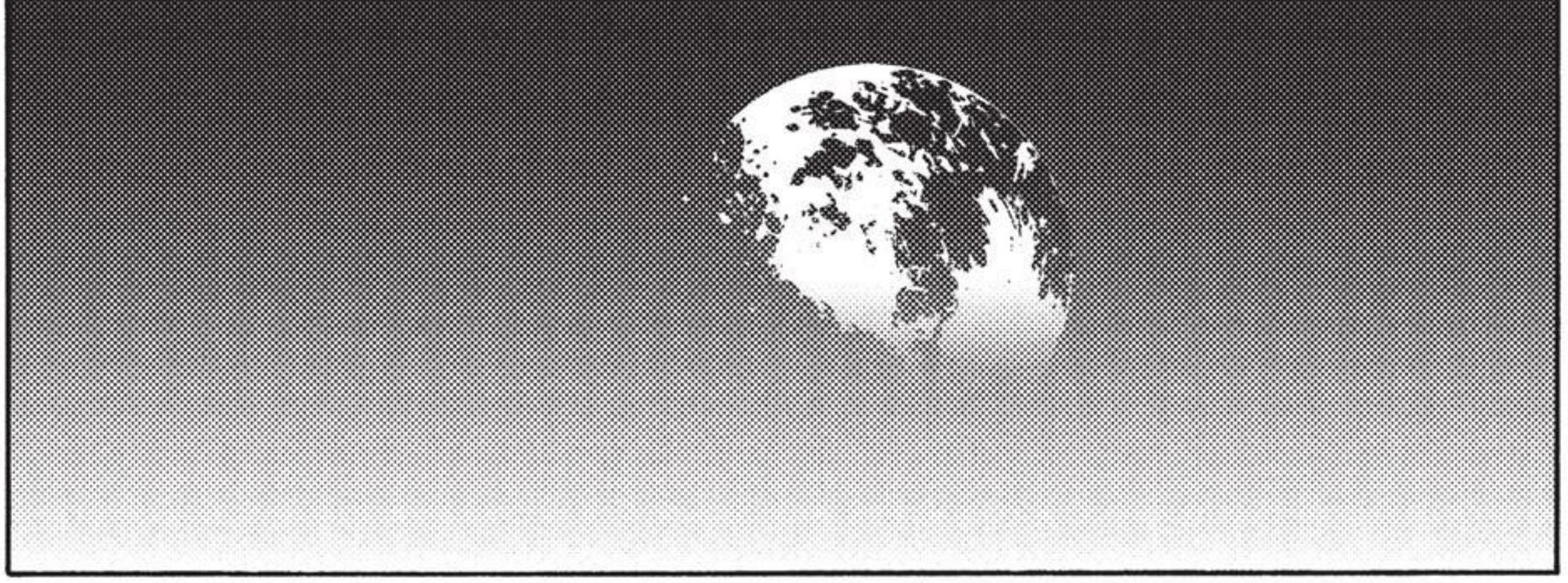
IT'S JUST A ROCK.

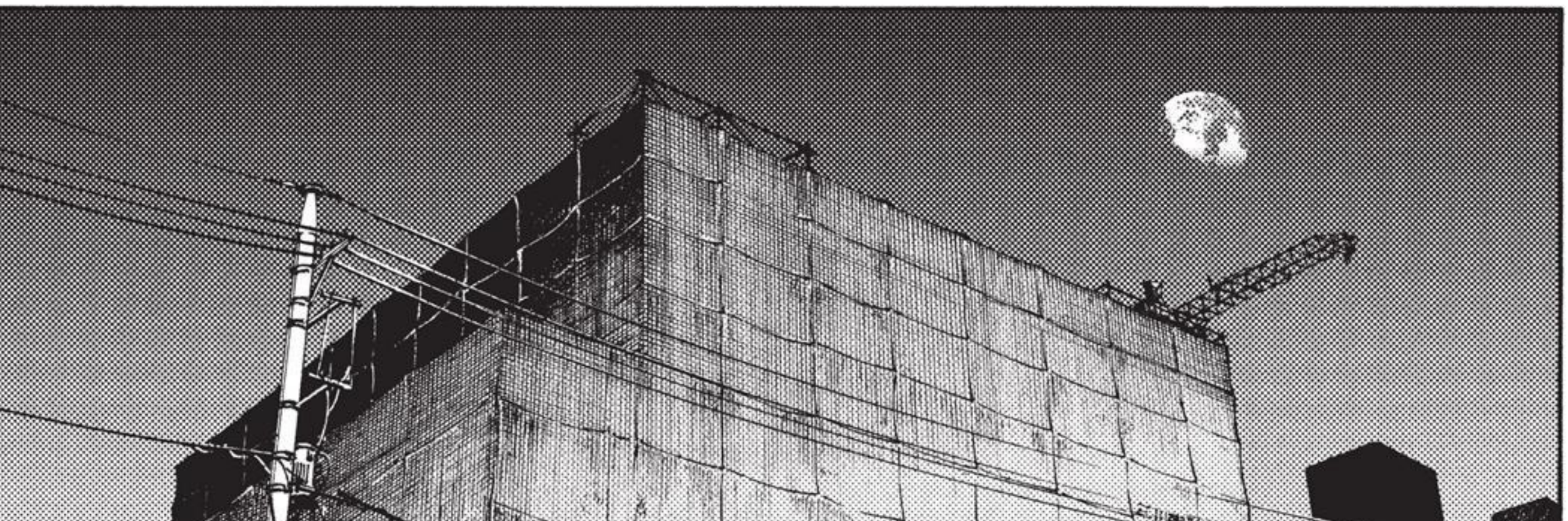
The police ruled it a suicide.

The man was found decomposing two weeks later.

Chapter 2 A Waste of Justice







SIGNS: Mikawa Construction



huff

huff

...YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

BUT...

...NEITHER DID I.

whimper ...

Our line of work is rather unique.

We deal in souls.

BRRRING

The pay is not good by any stretch of the imagination.

But it's important work, at least as important as the Pope's job.

The soul has a lifespan of five thousand years, and within this time it is continually transferred from one person to the next. Our job is to manage souls and make sure the whole process goes smoothly. It's very important.

YOUR NEW PART-NER?

AND YET... AMANO-KUN HAS DIS-APPEARED. WHAT IS HE DOING?

CLICK

SIGN: Natural Stones

THE PEOPLE DEPLOYED FOR OUR WORK— PEOPLE LIKE AMANO-KUN— AREN'T LIKE YOU AND ME.

KAE-CHAN... HAS... TOKIEDA-SAN TOLD YOU?

HMM.

WHAT'S HE LIKE?

THEY DON'T HAVE SOULS.

IT'S LIKE THEY EXIST ONLY FOR THE WORK.

I THINK HE SAID THAT THEY HAVE SOMETHING OTHER THAN A SOUL INSIDE OF THEM.

THEY DON'T HAVE MEMORIES FROM WHEN THEY WERE HUMAN.

SCRUNCH

BUT I GUESS THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND HUMAN EMOTIONS.

mutter

I WONDER, DO THEY EVEN REALIZE THAT GETTING INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE COULD DISRUPT THAT PERSON'S PLAN?

THEY INTERACT WITH PEOPLE IN A VERY BLUNT WAY.

FWUMP

Once again, I only get New Year's cards...

...from people trying to sell me stuff.

WHAT?!

I HAVE PLENTY OF—

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS, SAKURAI-SAN.

PFFT.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT JUST AFRAID OF GETTING HURT?

BUT YOU'RE SAYING "IT COULD DISRUPT THAT PERSON'S PLAN." THAT SOUNDS LIKE SUCH A LAME EXCUSE!

I... I HAVE FRIENDS ...

rurde

HOW ARE YOU SUP-POSED TO GROW IF YOU NEVER GET HURT?

I BET MY SOUL HAS A LOT MORE EXPERIENCE THAN YOURS, SAKURAI-SAN.

HEH HEH.

THAT'S SO... MATURE ...

WOW...

Come take a look!

I BET IT'S IN ITS ADOLES-CENCE OR SOME-THING.

THAT'S ABOUT THE AGE WHEN PEOPLE WANT TO STAY HID-DEN IN THEIR OWN SHELL.

...I WONDER HOW OLD MY SOUL IS NOW.

But they're so sour ...

ERK.

ESPECIALLY SINCE I'M NOT CHILDISH ENOUGH TO TAKE THE PICKLES OUT OF MY BURGER.

...TCH.

RATTLE

RATTLE

BURBLE

BURBLE

PSHHH

TO BE CONTINUED

chitter

chitter

chitter

NO CATCH

...HEY.

roll...

PIECE OF CAKE. ♪

...DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE YOU'RE STANDING?

ARE THOSE FLOWERS FOR ONE OF THOSE "MEMORIAL" THINGS?

SO I WAS CLEAN-ING IT UP.

YEAH, THERE WAS A SMASHED SOUL FROM AN UNPLANNED ACCIDENT. IT TURNED INTO A STAIN.

I MEAN, HE'S NOT HERE ANYMORE. HE'S DEAD.

YOU DON'T NEED THAT.

THE GROWTH OF A SOUL, HM...

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE ANY-THING GOOD COMES OF GETTING INVOLVED WITH OTHERS.

murmur

murmur

murmur

SEE? NOTHING GOOD !!

WOULD YOU PLEASE LET HIM GO?

UH... UM...

THAT'S... MY LITTLE BROTHER.

UH... WELL, UM...

WHO ARE YOU? MIND YOUR OWN BUSI-NESS!

...

HE REALLY DID A NUMBER ON YOU.

DOES IT HURT ?

hmm...

NO, NOT AT ALL.

I JUST...I GOT A LITTLE WORKED UP.

ペコ bow

NO, NO. MY BROTHER WAS VERY RUDE.

I'M SORRY.

I JUST FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING OFF WITH MY RIGHT ARM.

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN BY "HURT"!

CLAMP

I DON'T HAVE A BROTH—

BUT, WELL, AFTER WE GREW UP, WE NEVER SO MUCH AS SAID HELLO TO EACH OTHER.

...I HAD A TROU-BLEMAKER LITTLE BROTHER, TOO.

YEAH.

YOU DO START TO THINK THAT.

NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES OF GETTING TOO INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE.

ISN'T THAT HOW LIFE IS?

BUT IF YOU NEVER GET IN-VOLVED...

...THEN YOU'LL START TO REGRET THAT, TOO.

ONCE SOME-ONE'S DEAD... THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

NO MATTER HOW MANY FLOWERS I GIVE HIM,

IT'S TOO LATE. ...YOU KNOW?

I AM VERY SORRY...

...I SEE.

YOUR LITTLE BROTHER WAS RIGHT ON THE MONEY.

...NO.

...SORRY I HIT YOU.

HE'S DEAD.

HE ISN'T THERE ANY-MORE.

...

The places that are stained by those psycholith fragments are tainted with negative energy, and attract even more unplanned accidents.

A soul whose plans are cut short by an unplanned accident breaks into pieces...

Cleaning those stains is another part of our job.

I GAVE YOU MY OLD CELL PHONE! USE IT!

Take this seriously!

EXCUSE ME!

IT'S A BIGGER PAIN WHEN YOUR SOLO WORK TURNS INTO A FISTFIGHT.

IT'S A PAIN IN THE BUTT.

THAT'S THE RULE.

...BUT AMANO-KUN, WE WORK IN PAIRS.

SHOCK ナーン

TOSS

BUT IT'S LAME.

SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT.

ANY-WAY...

...ABOUT THAT GUY.

?

CLATTER

I DEFINITELY PURGED THE STAIN ON THE GUARDRAIL.

I COLLECTED THE PIECES OF THE STONE— I DID EVERY-THING RIGHT.

BUT THERE WAS A STAIN-BEAST CLINGING TO HIM.

A STAIN-BEAST ?

...?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?

YOU'RE SO DUMB.

IT MEANS THERE'S ANOTHER STAIN IN THAT GUY'S RANGE OF ACTIVITY.

COME ON, TAKE YOUR JOB SERI-OUSLY,

BIG BRO!

SIGN: Police Station

プルルルル
BRRRRING
WWN
WHAT'S UP, SAKURAI?
BEEP
HELLO?
I TOLD YOU ABOUT HIM. THE DETECTIVE WE WORK WITH, REMEMBER?
ARIMA-SAN.
WHO ARE YOU CALLING?
TIKKA TAKKA
HMM...
HAVE YOU HAD ANY CASES THERE? MAYBE A FATAL ACCIDENT?
I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU. IT'S ABOUT THE SECOND DISTRICT OF XX IN SHINJUKU.

I UNDERSTAND.

WELL?

POLICE DON'T TRUST OCCULT TYPES LIKE YOU GUYS.

IF IT'S A MURDER OR SOMETHING, DON'T STICK YOUR NOSES IN IT—LEAVE IT TO THE AUTHORITIES.

...

NATURALLY, THIS IS ALL HUSH-HUSH ...

WHISPER

TWO WEEKS AGO, WE GOT A MISSING PERSONS REPORT FOR AN 18-YEAR-OLD BOY.

THE INVESTIGATION'S BEEN CALLED OFF BECAUSE THEY THINK HE'S JUST DITCHING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.

HE WAS LAST SEEN WORKING CONSTRUCTION ON AN APARTMENT COMPLEX AT THE CORNER OF THAT INTERSECTION.

SO THIS IS IT ...?

SIGNS: Mikawa Construction

CLICK

SHIRT: Mikawa Construction, Inc,

...IGNORING MY CALL AGAIN?

BOOP... BOOP BOOP BOOP

カチ CLICK

REDIAL NO.27 WORK YAMADA 0907

DAMN IT.

ツー TT... CRUNCH

IT'S BETTER WITH NO PEOPLE AROUND.

CRUNCH

...WHY DID WE WAIT UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

I CAN'T SEE A THING.

IF WE INTERACT WITH ANYONE, THERE'S A RISK THAT WE'LL DISRUPT THEIR SOUL'S PLAN.

WE MUST ALWAYS KEEP A COOL...

CLANG

AIEEEE!

WINCE

ARF!

OWW...

WHERE'D THIS SKINNY LITTLE GUY COME FROM?

GRRR

EASY THERE... GOOD DOGGIE.

SHHH

TELL YOUR-SELF THAT.

GRRRR...

OH!

FOUND THE STAINS!

I DUN-NO.

RATTLE

RATTLE

HERE...? IS THE DOG... GUARD-ING IT?

FLASH

WHO'S THERE?

!

ZSH

YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE HEALTH INSPEC-TORS.

...YOU HERE TO FEED THE STRAY OR SOME-THING?

ARF

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?

ARF

UH... HELLO.

THAT'S UNUSUAL... WHY DOES HE HAVE AN IRON PIPE?

ZSH

I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.

...

ARF

ARF

ERR... UH, SOME-THING LIKE THAT.

EWAAH

yipe...!

SORRY. WE WERE JUST A LITTLE LOST.

WE'LL JUST GET OUT OF YOUR WAY.

THIS GUY'S DANGER-OUS!

...!!

PSHHH

HEY, AMANO-KUN!

EEP... IT'S, UH... ART! GRAFFITI ART. RIGHT, AMANO-KUN?!

ARF

ARF

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!!

ARF ARF

DON'T GIVE ME THAT!

I'M SORRY. WE'LL PAY FOR THE DAMAGE...

ACTUALLY, NO, WE'LL GET RID OF IT.

WHY...

...DOES HE LOOK SO PROUD?

YEAH.

ARF

WHAT?

I'M GONNA CALL THE POLICE!

I'LL GRAB

THAT'S A FULL-ON CRIME, DAMN IT!

ARF

BUT THAT WOULD BE BAD, WOULDN'T IT? FOR YOU, I MEAN.

Y...

YOU... WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

UH... OOPS. DIDN'T MEAN TO BLURT THAT OUT.

AR...

NOTHING, REALLY.

HIP

CATCH

AAAHHH!

AMANO-KUN, YOU IDIOT!

WE'RE JUST HERE TO CLEAN THE STAIN LEFT BY SOMEONE'S DEATH, THAT'S ALL.

GRIP

...DO ANY-THING WRONG ...

I...!

I DIDN'T ...

BUT...

WHAM

BUT I CAN'T GO BACK NOW!

AMANO-KUN!

...?!
...!

GUH...
WHA...
WHAT...
?!

WHAT?

HM?

HIII
ZSH!

WHA...

GUESS IT'S 'CAUSE I DON'T HAVE A SOUL?

IT DOESN'T HURT.

HM? OH.

IT'S... DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN.

BUT WE AREN'T WITH THE POLICE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

...

WHAT THE HELL *ARE* YOU PEOPLE ?!

AMA-NO-KUN, GIVE ME THE PSYCHOLITH. I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK...

TUG

JUST GIVE ME ONE MINUTE, PLEASE.

CLATTER

GRIP

FLUTTER

...AT THIS SOUL'S MEMORIES.

These aren't the memories I'm looking for...

I want the memory of when he died.

HEY, PART-TIMER!

THAT'S OKAY! I'M JUST GOING TO PUT THESE DOWN!

THANKS!

SAVE THAT FOR TOMOR-ROW!

IT'S NOT SAFE UP THERE— IT'S TOO DARK!

NO PROB-LEM.

slip スリ



KA-CLANG CLANG

...A YOUNG MAN.

HOW... DO YOU KNOW THAT?

WERE YOU WATCH-ING...?

IT HAP-PENED UP THERE, RIGHT ?

YOU WERE WORK-ING DOWN BELOW.

!? ? : OOF...

HE TOOK A WRONG STEP...

...IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT.

THE TRUTH IS, I SAW IT JUST NOW.

NO... WELL, YES.

YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

NN... HNNH!

...HNN.

KA-CLANG ガラ!!

...I DIDN'T... HAVE A CHOICE.

...YAMADA-SAN, I'M SORRY.

THERE'S BEEN...AN ACCIDENT.

THANKS FOR COMING TODAY.

ガラ RATTLE

SHIRT: Mikawa Construction, Inc.

...IT WAS ONE OF THE PART TIME WORKERS. ...TOP LEVEL.

...!

SCRITCH

OH, REAL-LY?

SCRITCH

WHAT LEV-EL?

WHAT?

THIS *IS* A PROB-LEM.

ACTUALLY... WE HAVEN'T BEEN INSURING THE PART-TIMERS.

...ONLY ME.

...WHO ELSE WAS STILL AT THE SITE?

LET'S KEEP THIS BETWEEN THE TWO OF US.

...

BUT—

whimper ...

LET'S BE REALISTIC. YOU HAVE A FAMILY, DON'T YOU?

CAN YOU COVER THE COST OF REPARATIONS?

TAK TAK

INSURANCE IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.

BUT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE IS YOURS, TAKABE-SAN.

I BUR-IED HIM...

IN THE MOUN-TAINS.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.

NO. NOT WORTH IT.

OUR JOB'S DONE HERE.

ARE YOU GOING TO REPORT ME?

IF YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING, I DOUBT ANYONE WILL FIND OUT.

BUT...

I THINK IF YOU TURN YOURSELF IN, YOUR PUNISH-MENT WILL BE LIGHT.

YOU WERE ONLY FOLLOW-ING YOUR COMPANY'S ORDERS TO COVER IT UP.

YOU'RE NOT... GOING TO DO ANY-THING...?

...?

NO...
WE'RE
NOT...

...We cannot judge between good and evil.

We have one, and only one tenent for our work: "Do not hurt the soul."

In our world of ever-changing values, even actions done with the best of intentions might throw someone's life off track.

...But I...

...NO.

THAT'S ...OKAY.

I... REALLY SHOULD TURN MYSELF IN.

I KEEP TRYING TO CONVINCE MYSELF THAT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG, BUT... I CAN'T.

A MAN DIED.

AND IF I CHOOSE TO DO NOTHING ABOUT IT, I...

MAYBE IT *WAS* AN ACCI-DENT.

...BUT I WAS INVOLVED.

...

BUT IF YOU NEVER GET INVOLVED...

...THEN YOU START TO REGRET THAT, TOO.

SO, WHAT ABOUT ME...?

ARF ARF ARF ARF

ARF わんっ

!

あの人のスマホ

YES, CERTAINLY...

...!

I WANT TO TALK TO MY SUPERVISOR.

BUT HE'S BEEN AVOIDING MY CALLS.

SO, HEY.

COULD YOU LEND ME YOUR PHONE?

...HERE.

CLICK カチ CLICK カチ

?

WHAT?!

TURN YOUR-SELF IN?

THIS IS YAMADA...

...TAKABE-SAN! YOU?

WWN

BUT... BUT YOU TOLD ME TO DO IT.

YES, I DID. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PROOF OF THAT.

YOU WERE THE ONE AT THE SITE WHEN IT HAPPENED.

AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DISPOSED OF THE BODY.

RATTLE

sigh...

...YEAH, YEAH. NOW, SEE HERE.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO TURN YOURSELF IN FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL SATISFACTION, AND RUIN MY LIFE IN THE PROCESS. YOU DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT?

CALL TIME: 03:54

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE IF IT'S BECAUSE ONE DIED?

...A MAN DIED...

WE'RE ALWAYS REPLACING PART-TIMERS ANYWAY.

THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY.

WOULD YOU PLEASE CONSIDER THE KIND OF PROBLEMS YOUR RIDICULOUS SENSE OF JUSTICE COULD CAUSE THE COMPANY?

...DAMN IT.

CLICK 7:10 05:09

BOOP BOOP BOOP

I'M GOING TO TURN MYSELF IN.

...WITH OR WITHOUT PROOF, THIS IS MY PROBLEM.

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO, OLD MAN?

...HE HUNG UP ON ME.

HERE'S YOUR PHONE.

TAKE THIS.

...UM.

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T ASK FIRST.

I JUST RECORDED YOUR CONVERSATION.

...!

I CAN'T JUST DO NOTHING.

...I DID GET INVOLVED, AFTER ALL.

YOU...

Whoa

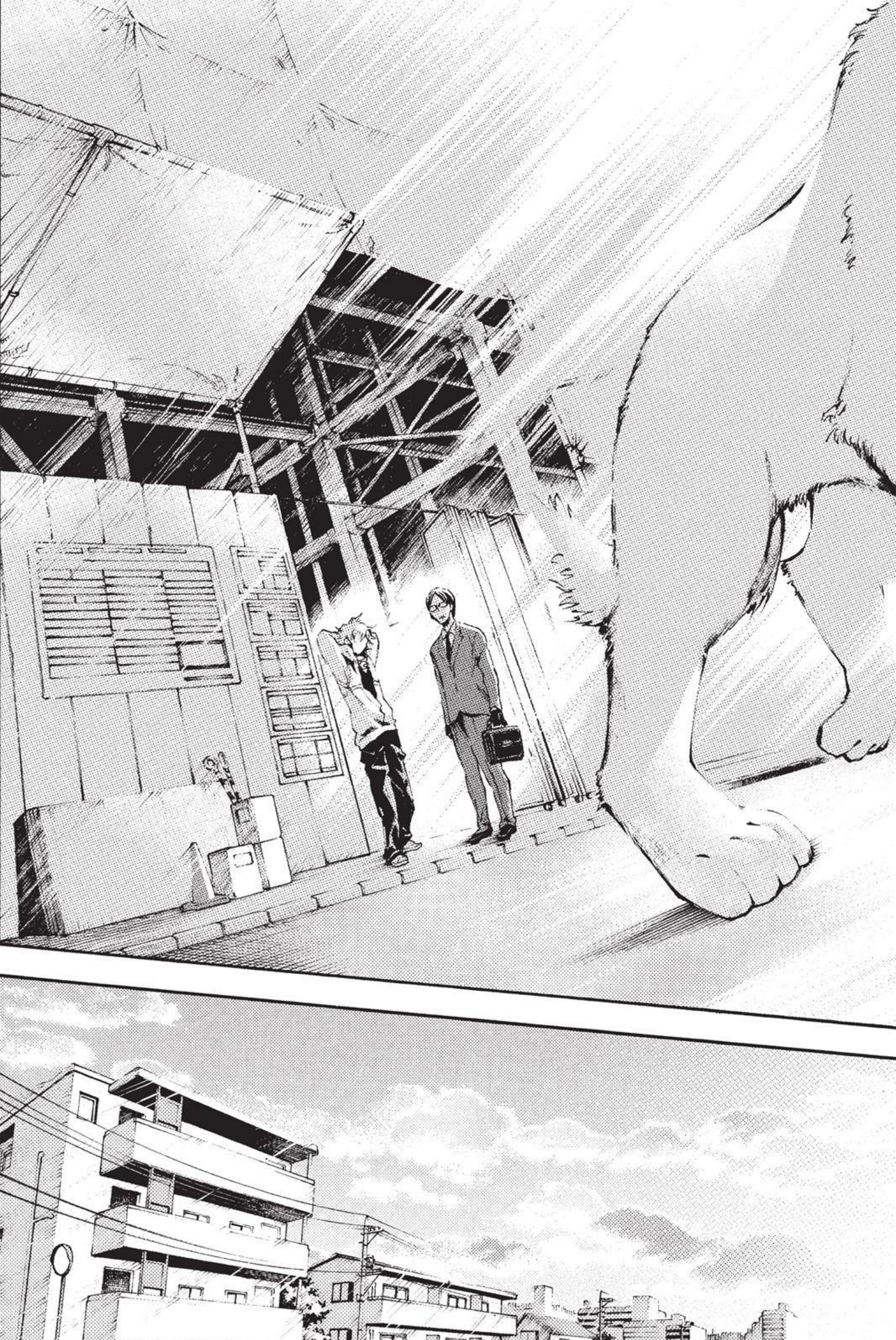
YOU CAN DO THAT?! WITH THAT LOSER PHONE?!

... AMANO -KUN.

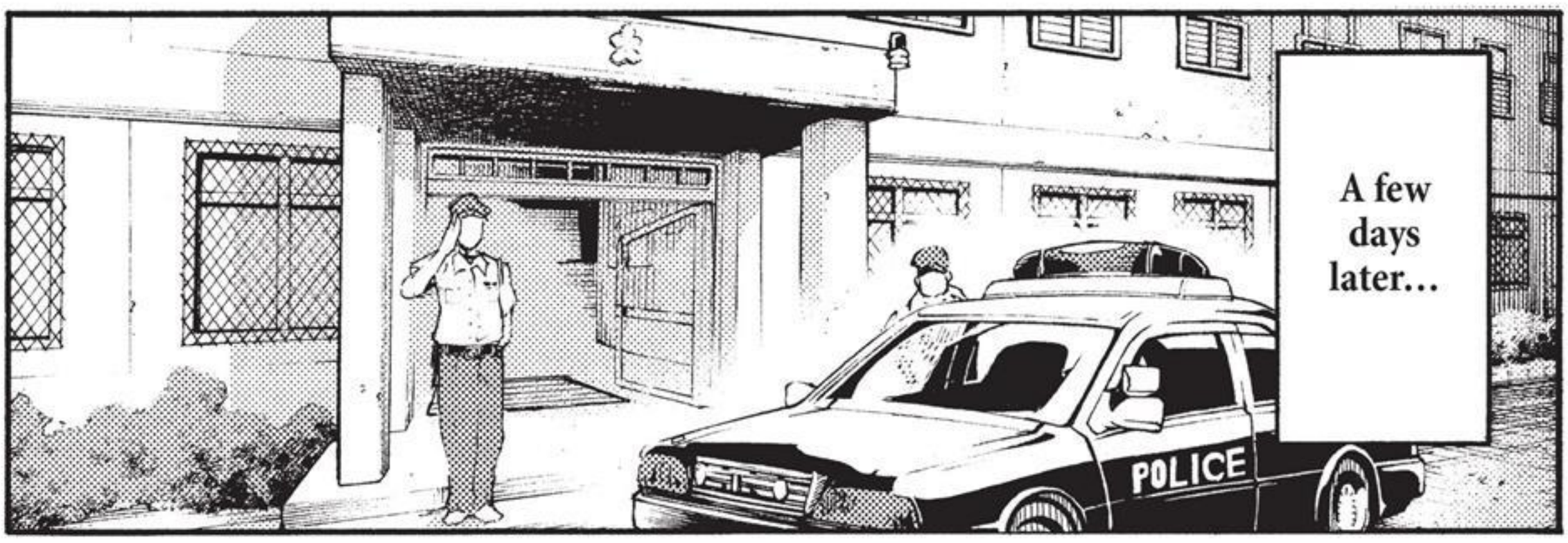
I'm gonna smack you...

WAS THAT REALLY A GOOD IDEA?

GETTING INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE...













SIGN: Violent Crimes Division

...SOME-
THING
WRONG?

That
is the
“plan”.

90% of our
life is pre-
determined.

Good and evil in this life are not the issue.

The important thing is to make sure the soul can move on to its next life.

When the plan falls apart, the soul is damaged.

SIGN: Natural Stones

I know that.

YEAH. ...HE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE THE TYPE OF MAN WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING.

THAT'S KIND OF... SAD.

...SO IT WAS HIM.

BUT...

I...DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT A SOUL IS...

I THINK I WOULD HAVE REGRETTED IT MORE IF I HADN'T GOTTEN INVOLVED.

IT'S JUST LIKE HE SAID.

BUT I'M SURE IT'S THE SOUL THAT CREATES A PERSON'S THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS.

AND I WANT... TO TAKE CARE OF THOSE THINGS.

?

OH, YEAH.

...HUH?

YOU ATE THEM?

NOW, SEE HERE...

BECAUSE THAT SOUR TASTE IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE BITTERNESS OF LIFE!

ONLY AN ADOLESCENT WOULD TALK ABOUT LIFE IN TERMS OF PICKLES!



From the playwright

In other words, the “stains” may be nothing more than people's feelings. If that's the case, then our lives are covered in stains like that, which come into being and then are forgotten and disappear. Maybe you could say that a memorial service is the business of keeping those stains around. In that case, then I guess what Amano is doing is erasing memories. One of the themes of this story is “memories.” If you refer to them as “information” instead, they begin to sound like little more than dry facts. However, for the people affected, that “information” is connected to their emotions, which makes them into memories. I think that Amano and Sakurai are always bickering because of the lack of motivation brought about by that difference between “information” and “memories.” This manga is based on a short play, and I am the playwright.

Whenever I see flowers by a guardrail on the road, the reality of someone's death leaps into my heart. I don't know the person who died, so I don't feel anything in particular, but as long as there's someone there who prays for that person, I’m not going to go kicking those flowers. That is a special place. As Amano says in the story, there's nothing there anymore. The body was taken to the hospital, cremated, and buried in the cemetery. Nevertheless, people leave flowers at the scene of the accident. I wonder why that is. Is it because that was the last place that person existed in life? I don't know the reason, but I understand the sentiment. If you take away the flowers, and no one knows the reality of what happened there, then there is nothing special about that place.

Tomohiro Maekawa

From Niigata prefecture.
Chairman of the Ikiume theatre troupe, he works as a writer and producer.

His major works include *Sanpo Suru Shinryukusha [The Invader Takes a Walk], Kansū Domino [Function Domino], Omote to Ura to Sono Mukō [Front, Back, and Beyond].*

Shorter works include *Toshokan-Teki Jinsei [Library-Like Life], Purankuton no Odoriba [Plankton Landing], Kikkai [Mysterious], and others.*

Chapter 3 Game Start

splash

splash

splash

splash

有限会社
リヴィングストン

VAN: Y.K Livingstone

THAT BIG STORM LAST WEEK BROUGHT ALL THE MUD AND SAND DOWN-STREAM.

SO I THOUGHT WE MIGHT FIND SOME INTER-ESTING STONES.

KONK

IT'S JUST LIKE WE'RE IN THE "CHILDREN'S LIMBO".

WOBBLE...

BUT, WELL, THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

UGH! SO HEAVY ...

OOF...

THEY SAY ALL THE STONES THERE ARE PSYCHO-LITHS.

HA HA!

THERE REALLY IS A "CHILDREN'S LIMBO", YOU KNOW.

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PSYCHOLITHS TO GO AROUND. IT'S A SERIOUS PROBLEM.

CLATTER

NOW, THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE.

YOU WANNA LOOK INSIDE?

IT'S VERY LARGE.

WHEW...

IS THIS A PSYCHO-LITH, TOO, TOKIEDA-SAN?

HOW'S YOUR PARTNER DOING?

OH, AMANO-KUN?

...I'LL PASS, THANK YOU.

HA HA HA.

WIMP.

BUT HE'S NOT LIKE MY FIRST PARTNER.

SUZUKI-SAN WASN'T SO COLD-BLOODED.

HE'S EFFICIENT...

...THAT'S WHY SUZUKI DIDN'T LAST.

COLD BLOOD IS A GOOD THING.

THEY'RE KIND OF LIKE MAGNETS.

THAT'S WHY PSYCHO-LITHS ARE DRAWN TO THEM.

THE STONES INSIDE FOLKS LIKE THEM ARE SPECIAL. THEY'RE NOT LIKE HUMAN STONES.

YOU KNOW ...

sigh...

I'M ALWAYS RUNNING AROUND AFTER HIM. I HAVE CONSTANT STOMACH PAIN BECAUSE OF IT...

SO I HAVE MAGNETISM TO BLAME FOR HIS BEHAVIOR, THEN?

SOMETIMES HE GOES OFF ON HIS OWN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIM.

RUMMAGE

...WHEN I FIRST SAW HIM, I THOUGHT THAT MIGHT HAPPEN.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT. THOSE AREN'T EASY TO GET AHOLD OF.

KEEP THAT AROUND, AND I GUARANTEE AMANO WON'T GO AROUND THINKING ABOUT THINGS HE DOESN'T NEED TO THINK ABOUT.

RUSTLE

WOW... THAT WOULD BE A BIG HELP.

SO LET ME GIVE YOU THIS.

?

GAME BOY

...A GAME BOY?

THEY'RE PRETTY RARE, YOU KNOW.

RESTAURANT Dany's.
RESTAURANT Dany's.
Dany's
Dany's
BEEP-BOOP
GAMEBOY
BEEP-BOOP
BEEP-BOOP
...AND THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT THIS ABOUT?
YES...
I'M EATING.
BEEP-BOOP
BEEP-BOOP
ZII ZII
SSSIP
AMANO-KUN. YOUR SALISBURY STEAK'S GETTING COLD.
OH, HON-ESTLY ...
WHAT'S MY DAD DOING WITH A GAME BOY IN THIS DAY AND AGE?

ズルズル
SSSSIP
BEEP BEEP
pew
pew
IT'S JUST EASIER.
YOU LIKE COLA?
NOT REAL-LY.
HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE MUCH INTEREST IN FOOD...
erk...
EASIER, HE SAYS...
peww
BEEP-BOOP
BEEP
CRASH
?!
BUT... HE'S BEHAVING HIMSELF ANYWAY, SO THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?
YES, WELL.
I SHOULD HAVE AN EASIER TIME MANAGING AMANO-KUN NOW...

BEEP-BOOP

BEEP-BOOP

Man, this brings back memories.

GAME BOY

YOU JUMP THREE TIMES HERE, AND SEE?

SEE? YOU GET THIS ITEM HERE, AND...

WHAT? HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

HOW IS THIS SO HARD FOR YOU?

I'M DONE WITH THAT THING.

I WASN'T GET-TING ANY-WHERE.

slurp

WAAH!

JUST A... AMANO-KUN?!

IT'S GOT NOTH-ING TO DO WITH WORK, ANYWAY.

IF I CAN'T DO IT, I CAN'T DO IT.

ANY-WAY...

CLATTER

HUH? IS HE MAD?

...NO, HE WOULDN'T BE.

AMANO-KUN? WHERE ARE YOU GO-ING?

Must be rough...

IS THIS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE KIDS?

SORRY, KAE-CHAN. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

I'M GONNA HAVE TO ORDER SOME MORE STOMACH MEDICINE ...

IRK

CLATTER

UGH, THERE HE GOES AGAIN ...

FWOO♪

KLONG

!

CLUNK

STEP

WAIT FOR ME, AMANO-KUN!

gasp

Wheeze

I TOLD YOU NOT TO GO OFF ON YOUR...

...?

The stones inside them are special.

They're kind of like magnets.

...!

That's why...

SIGN: Yebibu Garden

...psycho-
liths are
drawn to
them.

WHOOSH...

SWOO...

FWOO...

FWHOOSH

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING!

ptoo!

ptoo!

ACK! WHA...

BWAH!

WHAP

BAM

!

...!

STAY AWAY FROM ME!

huff

huff

WHAT ARE YOU...!

SHE'S GOING TO KILL HERSELF.

...

I KNEW IT...

ANYWAY... I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL NOT TO SET HER OFF.

...YOUR SHOE.

YOU DROPPED IT.

BUT I WON'T BE NEEDING IT.

AND YOU'RE HERE TO GIVE IT BACK TO ME?

...OH.

I'M ABOUT TO BECOME A GHOST.

AND NOW IS NOT THE TIME!

YOU HAVE TO PUT MONEY IN IT!

HEY. THIS DOESN'T MOVE.

Hey!

CALM DOWN... WE NEED TO BE FRIEND-LY...

THE QUES-TION IS, HOW SERIOUS ABOUT THIS IS SHE?

...EXCUSE ME. WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE?

THAT'S CON-CRETE DOWN THERE, Y'KNOW.

HEY, LADY.

ARE YOU PRACTIC-ING YOUR DIVING ?

IT WAS JUST A JOKE! HE WAS TRYING TO HELP YOU RELAX!

CREAK

CLANK CLONK

CLUNK

WWN

HE'S JOK-ING!

tremble

tremble

U...

UNBELIEV-ABLE! HOW CAN YOU BE SO IN-SENSITIVE!

SO YOUR GONNA KILL YOURSELF EVEN THOUGH YOUR LIFE WAS REALLY GREAT UP UNTIL NOW?

THAT'S WEIRD.

YOU TWO ARE SPOILING EVERY-THING...

THIS IS MY LAST CONVERSA-TION IN LIFE? WITH YOU PEOPLE?

NOW IT FEELS LIKE EVERYTHING LEADING TO THIS WAS ALL FOR NOTHING.

IS IT *FUN* FOR YOU TO MESS WITH PEOPLE WHEN THEY'RE TRYING TO DIE?!

GO AWAY!

...YOU'RE GIVING OFF A REALLY HOSTILE VIBE!

MY STO-MACH... MY STO-MACH...

T'' T'' T'' CREAAA

...IT IS WHAT IT IS, I GUESS.

SO IF YOU'RE ASKING ME...

I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT "FUN" FEELS LIKE.

WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE WANT?!

...GIVE ME A BREAK ALREADY ...

WE'RE HERE...

...TO SAVE YOU.



ヒュー

WHOOOOSH

カ

YOU'RE TAKING *PHOTOS* OF THIS?!

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

GA-SHAK

JUST A...!

I'M GOING TO PHOTO-GRAPH YOUR SOUL'S PLAN.

BEEP

Yes. Because that is our job.

BUT IF SHE CAN STILL GET MAD AT PEOPLE... IT'S PROOF THAT SHE'S WILLING TO LIVE!

I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT WHEN SOMEONE IS CONSIDERING SUICIDE, SLIPSHOD EXPLANATIONS WILL ONLY ACCELERATE THEIR RESOLVE...

OH! GOOD, COME OVER HERE.

I *SAID* I WAS GONNA DIE!

CLONK

CLUNK

CLANK

CREAK

DO YOU WANT TO DIE OR NOT?

AND GET OFF THAT ANNOYING PANDA!

SKEE

YOU PEOPLE! DO YOU WANT TO STOP ME OR NOT?!

SKEE

THAT'S NOR-MAL.

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 88%

Plan fidelity rate: 88%.

Soul's remaining time: 362,000 hours.

SHE CER-TAINLY IS FULL OF SPIRIT.

HMM, SO THAT MEANS...

AMA-NO-KUN.

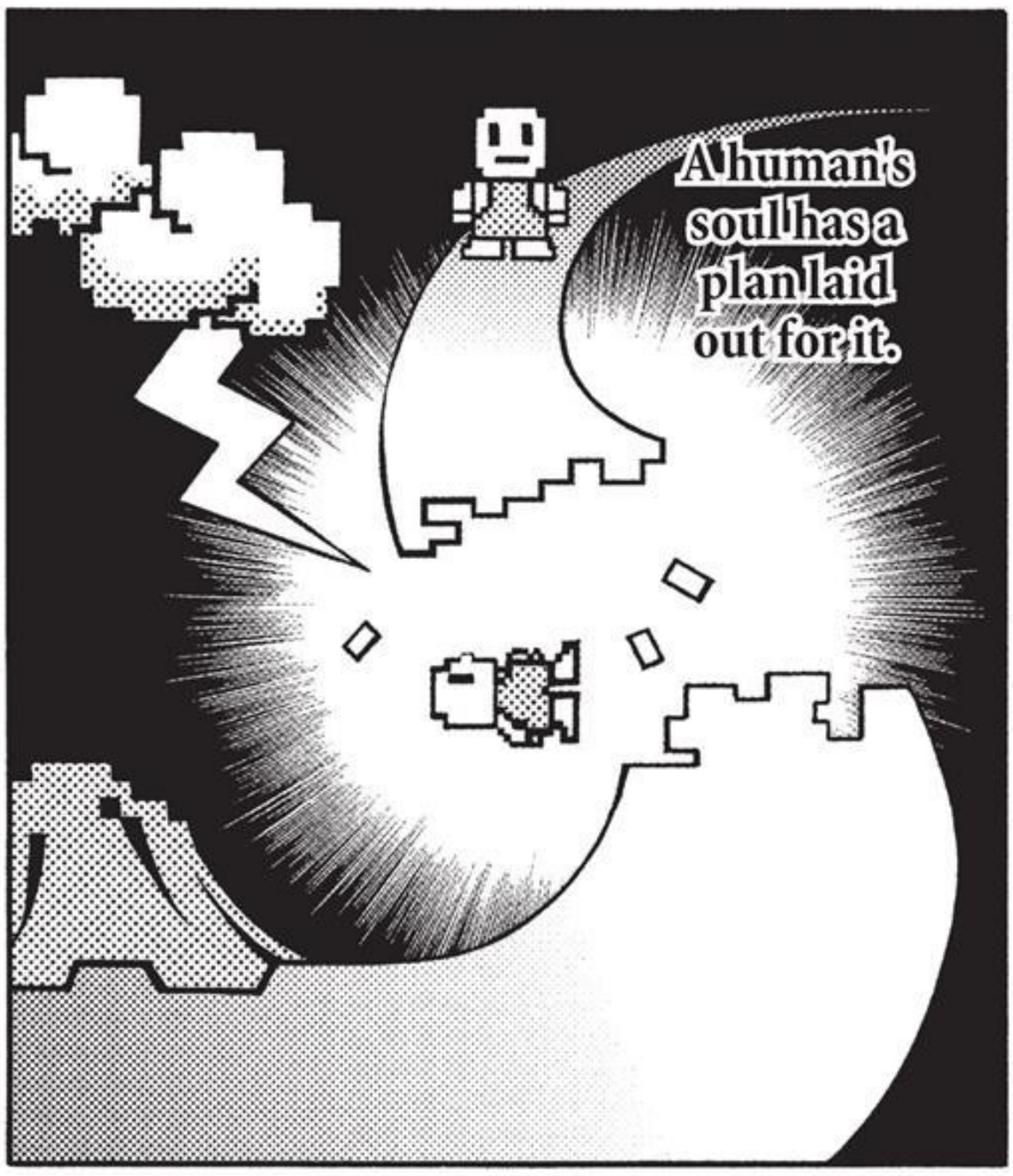
THIS IS "NOT IN HER PLAN".

SIGN: Playland

IT'S TIME TO GET TO WORK.

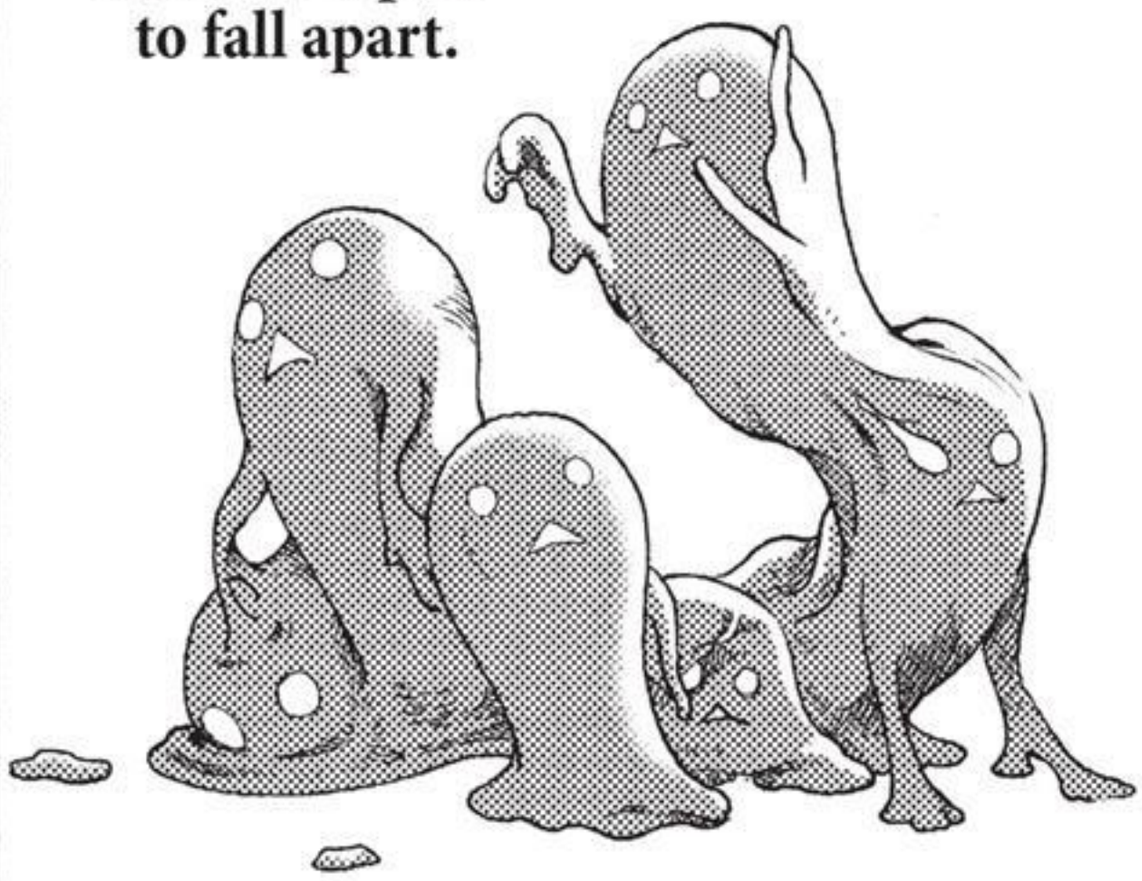
Our job...

...YES.

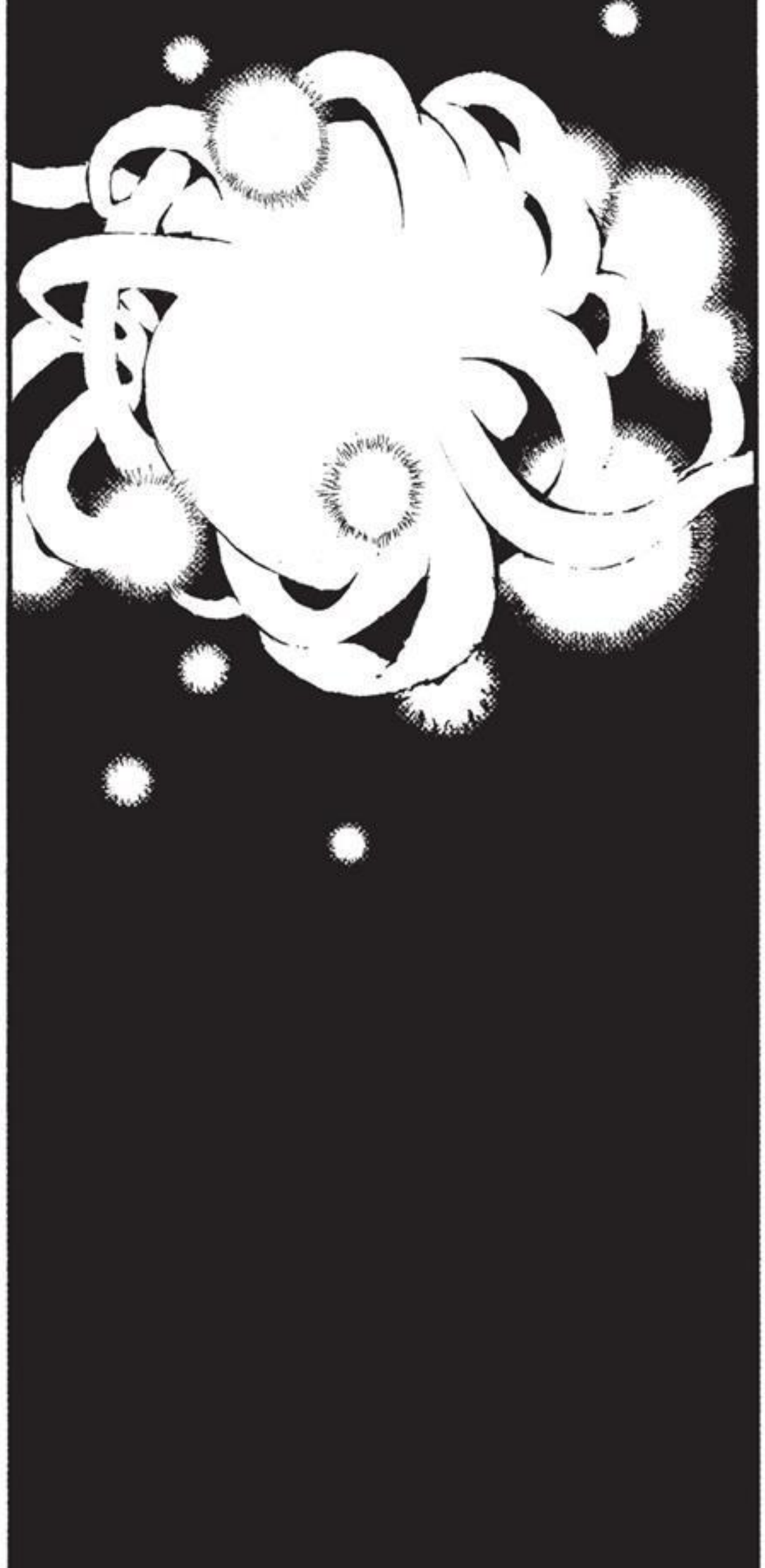


That "plan" is for the soul to grow by completing its role in its present life, then continuing on into the person't next life.

But various factors can cause that plan to fall apart.



...is to manage souls.



Our job is to prevent a decrease in the number of souls.

...HM?

HOW OLD IS IT?

NOT ONLY IS IT FAR TOO SOON FOR HER TO DIE... BUT HER SOUL IS ENORMOUS.

WAIT A MIN-UTE.

GA-SHAK

WHAT HAVE YOU TWO BEEN MUTTER-ING ON ABOUT ?

JUST LEAVE ME ALONE AL-READY.

THEN HER LIFE SHOULD BE FULL OF PO-TENTIAL.

SO WHY WOULD SHE END IT? ...IT'S SUCH A WASTE.

カチ.

CLICK

FOUR THOU-SAND YEARS OLD.

IF YOU'RE REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT NEVER PUTTING THAT SHOE BACK ON

AND DROPPING OUT OF LIFE...

...WHAT?

WHAT I'M SAYING IS...

THEN I'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR SOUL, HE'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR BODY, AND WE'LL CLEAN UP THE MESS.

HOW ABOUT THAT?

WE WON'T STOP YOU FROM DYING, BUT WE WILL STOP YOU FROM KILLING YOURSELF.

OTHER-WISE IT'D BE EXTRA WORK FOR US.

SO WE'RE GOING TO KILL YOU THE RIGHT WAY.

THEN FOUR-EYES OVER THERE WILL DISPOSE OF THE BODY.

OH.

I GET IT.

SO IN OTHER WORDS, *YOU'LL* KILL ME.

MY SOUL ...?

...

THE WORLD WILL THINK I JUST DISAP-PEARED, RIGHT?

AND YOU WON'T LEAVE A SINGLE TRACE.

WOULD YOU HELP ME DIS-APPEAR?

DO YOU NEED AN ABSCONDING AGENCY?

A DIS-APPEAR-ANCE. THAT COULD BE FUN.

HA...

AH HA HA HA!

WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE? ONE OF THOSE "ABSCONDING" AGENCIES?

...IF WE DID, WOULD YOU WANT TO KEEP LIVING?

NO, SHE SAID SHE WAS GONNA DIE.

ER.

HA HA. RIGHT. I DID.

...

...IT'S OKAY. SHE'S CALMING DOWN.

SHE'S STILL LOOKING FOR A REASON TO LIVE.

IF WE GET HER TO RETHINK IT FOR A SECOND, HER SOUL SHOULDN'T MAKE THAT SAME CHOICE AGAIN.

IF YOU'RE WILLING TO DIE, I COULD KILL YOU RIGHT NOW.

IT WON'T HURT AT ALL.

HMM...

THAT ***WOULD*** BE EVERY-THING I HOPED FOR, BUT...

MY SOUL'S PERMIS-SION...?

I JUST NEED YOUR SOUL'S PERMIS-SION.

IT'S A SIMPLE PRO-CESS.

IT'S A LITERAL STEP-UP.

IT'LL BE A RITUAL, WHERE YOU RISE UP FROM THE WORLD OF THIS LIFE TO STEP UPON THE FLOOR OF THE NEXT ONE.

YUP.

LIKE HOW YOU TOOK OFF THAT SHOE.

AND WITH THAT YOU'LL RENOUNCE THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT IN THIS WORLD.

THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU, RIGHT?

YES.

THANK YOU.

HE CAN'T EXTRACT HER SOUL UNTIL SHE TRULY DESIRES DEATH...

IT'S OKAY. SHE DIDN'T MEAN IT.

AH.

GLOW

WHAT ?!

BUT... THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!

Chapter 4 Flowchart



WHY'S HER SOUL...?! DID SHE... DID SHE REALLY WANT TO DIE?!

W... WAIT A MINUTE!


WHAM

FNN

WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO OBSTRUCT YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

HEY!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SAKURAI ?

...?

WHAT... JUST HAP-PENED?

GA-SHAK

huff ?

huff ?

...YOUR SOUL STARTED TO COME OUT OF YOUR BODY, AND YOU BEGAN TO DIE.

WHAT ?

SERI-OUS-LY?!

FOR THE PLANS OF SUCH A LARGE SOUL TO FALL APART LIKE THAT...

I WAS SO SURE IT WAS JUST A PASSING IMPULSE...

THERE'S NO *NEED* FOR YOU TO DIE!

YOU SHOULDN'T WASTE LIFE LIKE THAT!

WHY?!

WHY DID YOU GIVE YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION?! YOU COULD LIVE ANOTHER 41 YEARS!

YOU'RE THE ONES WHO SAID YOU WERE GOING TO KILL ME.

AND NOW I'M GETTING A CHEAP PEP TALK...

...?

GAHH

MAKE UP YOUR MINDS...!

HUH?

NO, DIE.

LIVE!

WHAT'S WITH THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF PLANS?

IT WAS A STRA-TEGIC ERROR.

LOOK AT THIS DATA.

IF HER SOUL KEEPS GROWING ACCORDING TO ITS PLAN,

SHE'LL CHANGE HISTORY. SEE?

WHOA. WHAT THE? FOR REAL?

...

MAYBE I SHOULD GET HER AUTOGRAPH...

...IS SHE UNDER THAT MUCH PRES-SURE?

TIKKA

I THINK... I'LL TRY TO FIND OUT WHY SHE WANTED TO KILL HER-SELF.

TIKKA

YES, BUT...

I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD ACTUALLY LEAVE HER BODY.

NO, BUT,

SHE GAVE HER SOUL'S PERMIS-SION.

THAT MEANS WE CAN TAKE CARE OF HER NOW. THAT'S THE RULE, RIGHT?

...

SO, UH...

NOT THAT IT MAKES YOU ANY LESS SUSPI-CIOUS...

BUT YOU GUYS REALLY DO HAVE SOME KIND OF STRANGE POWER, DON'T YOU?

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

TIKKA

TIKKA

MEGUMI KANZAKI, AGE 28.

WORKS IN ACCOUNT-ING AT THE RŌEIKAI FOUNDA-TION.

CURRENT ADDRESS ...

WHAT? LOOKS LIKE HER COMPANY OWNS THE DORM ACROSS FROM HERE.

THANKS FOR BELIEVING US.

MAKES THIS EASIER.

JUST SUICIDE WATCHERS WHO HAPPENED TO BE PASSING BY.

NO.

...!

HOLD ON NOW... HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

ARE YOU THE POLICE ?!

THIS IS... A WEBSITE THAT ONLY WE CAN ACCESS. IT'S CALLED "THE CENTRAL LIBRARY", AND IT SHOWS US AN INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL HISTORY.

THE CHOICES THAT THEY'VE BEEN PRESENTED WITH.

AND WHAT THEY CHOSE.

LIFE *IS* BASICALLY JUST AN ACCUMULATION OF CHOICES, RIGHT?

TIKKA

TIKKA

YES.

YOUR LIFE'S CHOICES.

CHOICES?

7:55 AM
▷ WAKE UP

8:22 AM

▷ GET FAST FOOD FOR BREAKFAST
▷ EAT SOMETHING FROM THE FRIDGE
▷ TURN ON THE TV
▷ GO BACK TO SLEEP
▷ WAKE UP TWO HOURS LATER
▷ CAN'T GET BACK TO SLEEP. GET OUT OF BED.
▷ MAKE COFFEE

YOU COULDN'T DECIDE IF YOU SHOULD GO TO A NEARBY FAST FOOD PLACE FOR BREAKFAST, OR JUST EAT SOMETHING YOU ALREADY HAD.

THAT'S AN EARLY TIME TO BE OUT OF BED ON A SUNDAY.

AS FOR TODAY... 8:22 AM.

▷ GET FAST FOOD FOR BREAKFAST
▷ EAT SOMETHING FROM THE FRIDGE.

MANY YEARS AGO, PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT "GAME BRAIN", AND DEBATED THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VIDEO GAMES AND REALITY...

YES, IT IS.

WHOA... IT'S KINDA LIKE A VIDEO GAME.

?

I GET IT... THAT'S WHY.

OH...

BUT IF YOU DON'T TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE DIFFERENCE IN STAKES, THEY'RE PRACTICALLY THE SAME.

LIFE HAS DIFFERENT STAGES, AND YOU OBTAIN ITEMS, JUST LIKE IN GAMES.

YOU MAKE CHOICES AND BEAT CHAL-LENGES...

CRASH

BEEP-BOOP

BEEP-BOOP

MAYBE THAT'S WHY HE TOSSED THAT VIDEO GAME.

AMANO-KUN DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL, SO HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY LIFE CHALLENGES TO CLEAR.

YOU REALLY STRUGGLED OVER THAT ONE.

THERE ARE A LOT OF CHOICES.

...!

10:04 AM

▷ PHONE CALL FROM ICHIRO SAKUMA.

ANSWE

IGN

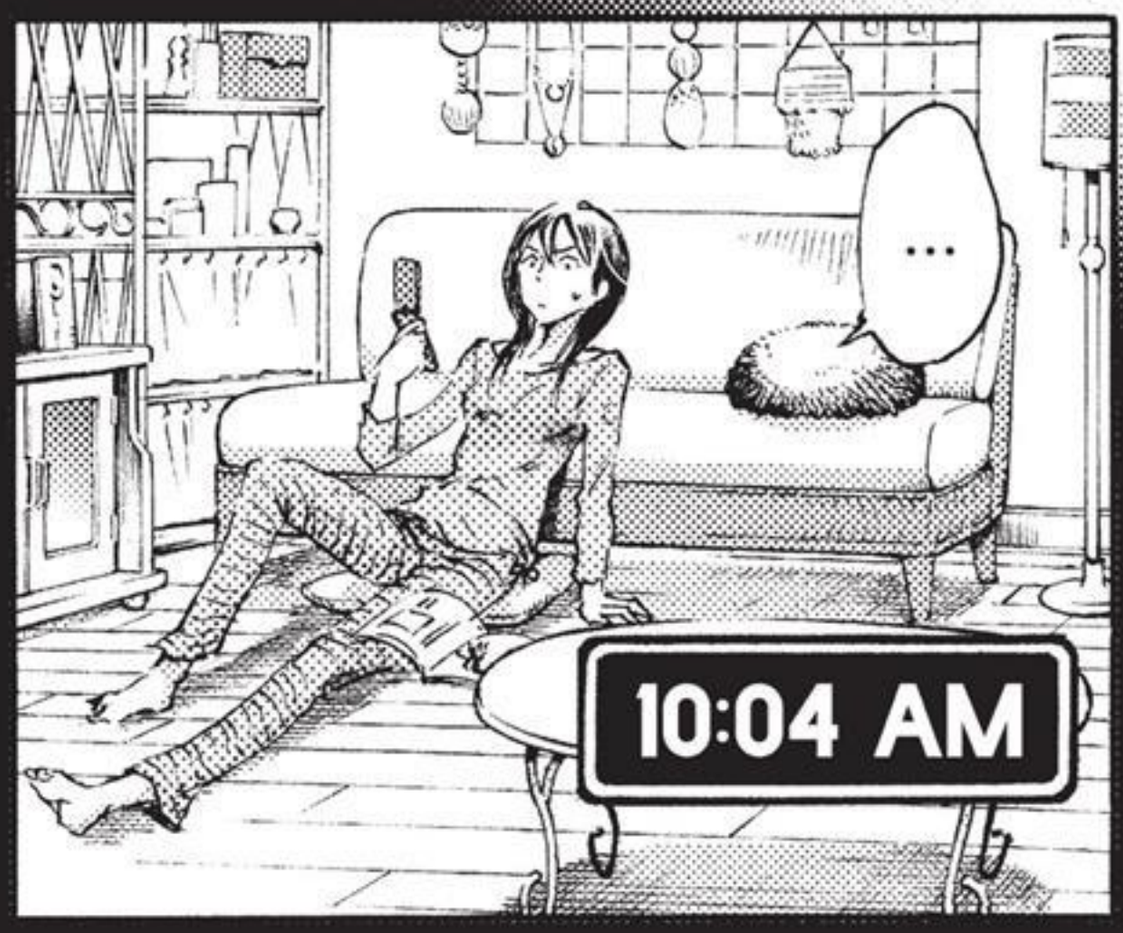
HM?

10:04 AM, A PHONE CALL FROM ONE ICHIRO SAKUMA.



KANZAKI'S CHOICE

▷ TALK TO HIM AND THINK IT OVER.







RIGHT NOW...

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE PAPERS.

...

sniffle...

ズズ...

OH, CRAP... UM... OKAY, THIS CALLS FOR...

UH... HUH? KANZAKI-SAN?

NGH!

NN...

HNN!

KANZAKI'S CHOICE

▷ TRY CRYING.

DON'T JUDGE ME!

WOW, THAT'S TERRIBLE. YOU WERE FAKING IT.

1:40 PM

YOU LIVE AROUND HERE, RIGHT?

UH...IT MAY NOT BE A GOOD IDEA TO DISCUSS THIS HERE. LET'S GO TO YOUR PLACE.

sniffle

CREAK

WAIT OUT HERE.

UM...I JUST NEED A MINUTE TO TIDY UP.

THUNK

PLEASE.

TAKE YOUR TIME.

NOT REALLY SEEING ANYTHING IMPORTANT, ARE WE?

...?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

1:47 PM

WHEW.

FOR NOW, LET'S JUST KEEP WATCHING.

Enter

CLICK

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOUR APARTMENT TO BE SO CHARMING.

... WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?

I ALSO HAVE BEER.

OH, THEN I'LL HAVE A BEER.

MAN, THIS GUY IS OBNOX-IOUS.

... WHAT DO I DO?

... THANKS.

YOU EMBEZZLED FROM OUR AFFILIATES' RENT AND UNION DUES...

IN JUST FOUR YEARS.

RUSTLE

STILL, YOU SURPRISED ME.

FOR A TOTAL OF 82 MILLION YEN*.

THAT'S QUITE IMPRES-SIVE.

1:56 PM

CONFRONTED BY ICHIRO SAKUMA WITH PAPERS PROVING THE EMBEZZLEMENT OF 82 MILLION YEN.

*About $820,000

...THAT IS IMPRES-SIVE.

IT WASN'T A COMPLI-MENT!

THANKS.

HA!

IF I WERE THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO COULD DO THAT, I WOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE MONEY TO BEGIN WITH.

BUT...

THAT'S NO REASON TO TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE, IS IT?

YOU CAN JUST PAY IT BACK OVER TIME...

BUT SHE HAS SUCH AN INCREDIBLE SOUL...

I KIND OF... CAN'T STAND HER.

RIGHT...

...BE-SIDES.

THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING.

1:59 PM

CAN YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT?

SHRR...

...I WONDER IF THIS WILL WORK.

2:21 PM

GLUG ゴク

KANZAKI'S CHOICE

▷SLIP HIM A SLEEPING DRUG.

I MEAN ...

IT'S NOT LIKE I NEED TO TELL THE COMPANY OR THE POLICE RIGHT AWAY.

AAH!

IT'S NICE TO HAVE A BEER IN THE DAY-TIME.

I WAS JUST SHOCKED, IS ALL...

-GREAK

YOU'RE... PRETTY MUCH MY TYPE, KANZAKI-SAN.

...WE COULD RUN AWAY TOGETHER.

DO YOU STILL HAVE THE MONEY?

JUST KID-DING.

WELL... WHAT DID I EXPECT?

SIGH...

OH, SORRY.

MAN, HE'S SLOW...

SNAP

SNAP

IF HE DOES ME, CAN I PIN PART OF THE BLAME ON HIM?

AM I DRUNK ?

... DAMN IT.

HUH ?

SWOON...

NN...

Huff

Huff.

drip

drip

Ih. Huff

Huff

HEH HEH ...

SLUMP

Heh!

Huff

Whew ...

SO—

カチャ RATTLE

カチャ RATTLE

ANY-ONE.

...GOING TO TELL

I... I'M

NOT...

SORRY. THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL.

ZLRR ズル.

...?

I JUST CAN'T DO IT.

RUN AWAY WITH YOU? SPARE ME.

WAIT A MINUTE.

2:44 PM

▷ KANZAKI'S CHOICES

- CALL AN AMBULANCE.
- FINISH HIM OFF.
- TAKE A SHOWER.
- HAVE A SMOKE.

▷ HAVE A SMOKE.

CLICK

WAIT...

HOW COULD YOU...?

whoa.

WHA—

EVERY-THING IS JUST SUCH A PAIN.

SEE?

...

WAY TOO LATE.

I MEAN, HE'D ALREADY STOPPED BREATHING.

...I GUESS IT'S TOO LATE.

THAT WAS... TWO HOURS AGO?

THAT'S LIFE.

YOU COULDN'T HELP IT. YOU WERE OUT OF OPTIONS.

UH.

FWIP

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHEN TO MAKE YOUR EXIT.

...HOW CAN THEY BOTH BE SO QUICK TO GIVE UP?

tch

NOT FOR MINORS.

KANZAKI-SAN, ABOUT YOUR "PLAN"...

YOUR ENORMOUS AND HISTORIC SOUL... IT WANTS TO GO ON LIVING.

I'M SURE THERE'S STILL SOMETHING YOU NEED TO DO IN THIS LIFE.

AND I KILLED A MAN.

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

DON'T PUT SO MUCH STOCK IN ME.

THIS ISN'T MY FIRST EMBEZZLING GIG, AND I'VE GOT A TON OF LOANS AND DEBTS TO PAY OFF.

I JUST *HATE* HARD WORK.

...WHAT IS WRONG WITH HER?

SHE DOES WHATEVER SHE WANTS, SHE CAUSES NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FOR EVERYONE AROUND HER, AND THEN SHE GIVES ME ATTITUDE?

WELL...

BUT IN OUR LINE OF WORK, ISN'T THE NEXT LIFE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THIS ONE?

COME ON, SAKU-RAI.

I GET THAT HER SOUL IS RARE.

LET'S JUST KILL HER.

THEN WHO CARES? THIS IS ANNOY-ING.

I WANT TO SAVE HER.

BUT IF WE FORCE HER SOUL TO DROP OUT NOW, WE'LL SLOW ITS GROWTH ...

AND THIS GUY, TOO. ALL THE STINKIN' TIME.

...HUH?

HIT ICHIRO SAKUMA IN
THE BACK OF THE HEA
WITH THE ASHTRAY F
THE COFFEE TABLE.
CONFIRMED THAT
NO LONGER BREA

KANZAKI'S CHOIC
▷GO TO

AY HOME

▷ GO TO THE BOOKSTORE

▷ WA1

ISN'T THERE SOME WAY—ANY WAY TO DEAL WITH THIS?

▷ W S...

▷ WATCH A DRAMA

TURN ON THE TV.

カチ
TIKKA

カチャ
TAKKA

IT DOESN'T SAY ANY-WHERE HERE... THAT HE'S DEAD.

THE DATA ONLY SHOWS THE FACTS, RIGHT?


CLATTER
HUH? YES, BUT...
KANZAKI-SAN! DO YOU HAVE THE KEY TO YOUR APARTMENT ?!


YEAH, YEAH.
PLEASE COME WITH ME!
AMANO-KUN, HURRY !


YOU HIT ICHIRO SAKUMA IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD WITH AN ASH-TRAY...
CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HUH ?
WHAT ?

...BUT HIS DEATH IS NOT A FACT.

TWITCH

TWITCH

HE'S STILL ALIVE!

Chapter 5 Cheat Code



SNORRRE

SN

SNORRRE

SNORRRE

HE'S SNOR-ING SO LOUDLY !

BUT...HE WASN'T BREATH-ING BEFORE ...

HE'S... ASLEEP ?

WELL... IT'S OFTEN A SYMPTOM OF A STROKE OR SUB-ARACHNOID HEMORR-HAGING.

HE'S IN CRITICAL CONDI-TION.

I'LL CALL AN AMBU-LANCE.

I'D RATHER DIE THAN BE ARRESTED!

I DON'T WANT TO GET IN ANY TROU-BLE!

NO!

SNATCH

SNORRE

...

THEN WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THIS?

YOU... YOU'RE IN PLENTY OF TROUBLE AS IT IS...

SNORRRE

SNORRRE

I DON'T KNOW...

SHOULDN'T YOU CHECK HIS SOUL PLAN?

RATTLE

It could turn into a stain.

THIS WAS AN "ACCI-DENT," RIGHT?

ANYWAY.

- ICHIRO SAKUMA
- AGE 34
PLAN FIDELITY RATE

LET'S SEE, ICHIRO SAKUMA, AGE 34 ...

whrr

SNAP

RUSTLE

OH, GOOD POINT.

HIS PLAN FIDELITY RATE IS...99%. ...HE HAS ALMOST ZERO TIME LEFT?!

...!

THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT...

SO THIS GUY WAS FATED TO DIE TODAY ANYWAY.

WHAT?

ZLRR... スリ... ...

SLIPPING HIM THE SLEEPING DRUG, HITTING HIM WITH THE ASHTRAY.

FOR HIM, THOSE WERE ALL THE RIGHT ANSWERS ...

...

...I SEE.

?

...SHE DID THIS MAN'S SOUL A SERVICE.

KANZAKI-SAN WAS DRAGGED INTO HIS DESTINY, AND MURDERED HIM.

BUT...

...AS FAR AS WE'RE CON-CERNED...

BURBLE

TWITCH

SNORE

TWITCH

GUH

...HIS BREATHING STOPPED.

AND HIS SOUL...

...WOW.

THAT WAS KIND OF ANTI-CLIMACTIC... THE WHOLE DYING THING.

THERE WAS NOTHING EMOTIONAL, NOTHING GLAMOROUS ABOUT IT.

...SAYS THE WOMAN WHO MADE THIS HAPPEN.

hmph...

SO BASICALLY, WE'VE MADE NO PROGRESS WITH THIS WHOLE ORDEAL.

HE'S...

...DEAD?

THERE IT IS.

WHAT IF YOU'D NEVER EMBEZZLED, OR MURDERED ANYONE?

KANZAKI-SAN, YOUR MIND'S STILL MADE UP ABOUT DYING?

...YES.

NO...

...WAIT.

HUH?

YOU SHOULD'VE SAID SOMETHING SOONER!

COME ON, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!

WHAT?! YOU CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN?! THAT WOULD BE AMAZING!

IF YOU COULD DO *THAT*, THEN MAYBE I WOULDN'T MIND LIVING.

EVEN IF IT MEANT BECOMING SOMEONE ELSE?

SOMEONE ELSE?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY?

YOU WON'T REALLY GET A PRACTICE RUN, THOUGH.

HM?

YOU MEAN THE THING WHERE I PUT THE SOUL BACK?

I'VE NEVER DONE IT BEFORE.

AMANO-KUN, CAN YOU DO A SOUL BIND?

...AND PUT IT BACK IN HIM.

YOU TAKE THE SOUL OUT OF HER...

OKAY, I'LL GIVE YOU A QUICK EXPLANATION. BASICALLY...

WHA?

COME ON, SAKURAI, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO GO ON LIV-ING IN THAT SITUATION.

BUT REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, YOU ARE AN EMBEZZLER AND A MURDERER.

WE DON'T WANT TO DAMAGE YOUR SOUL.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE WANT IT TO CARRY OUT ITS PLAN IN ITS ENTIRETY.

IF WE PUT YOUR SOUL INTO *THIS MAN'S* BODY,

HOWEVER...

THEN YOU CAN LIVE A BRAND NEW LIFE AS SAKUMA-SAN.

...NO WAY!!

I DON'T HAVE THE NERVE TO PUT UP WITH THAT BASTARD'S SWEATY BODY!

WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT ?!

YOU WANNA PUT *ME* IN *HIM*?!

WHAT ?

I DON'T WANNA DO IT, EITHER.

SOUL BIND? NO PRACTICE RUN?

THAT'S A PAIN IN THE NECK. NO CAN DO.

WHAT?

BEEP

SAKURAI'S RAGE METER

怒 RAGE

...WHA ...?

WHY DO WE HAVE TO DO THESE THINGS THAT ARE JUST SO... UGH?

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

BEE-BEEP ピピ

SAKURAI'S RAGE METER

怒 RAGE

SO THERE'S NO POINT IN TRY-ING.

IF I CAN'T DO IT, I CAN'T DO IT.

THEN I MIGHT BE WILLING TO CONSIDER IT.

BEE-BEEP ピピ

SAKURAI'S RAGE METER

怒 RAGE

ISN'T THERE AT LEAST, LIKE, A CUTE GIRL OR A HOT GUY WE COULD USE?

HEY, I KNOW.

SAKURAI'S RAGE METER

BEEP

怒

RAGE

GIVE IT...

CAN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING THAT ISN'T SELFISH AND HORRIBLE ?!!

...A REST !!

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE TWO OF YOU?!

CRASH

I DON'T LIKE THIS ANY MORE THAN YOU DO! IF THIS WEREN'T MY JOB, I'D CRUSH YOUR SOUL INTO PIECES AND FEED IT TO THE KOI IN THE TAMA RIVER!

WHA—?

HII

WHIP

WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, YOU EMBEZZLE! WHEN SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING YOU DON'T LIKE, YOU KILL HIM?!

AND WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST A WALL, YOU COMMIT SUICIDE ?!

YOU ONLY RUN AWAY LIKE THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE THE STOMACH TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO BEAT DIFFICULT LEVELS!

NOT HAVING A SOUL DOES NOT GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO MAKE LIGHT OF THE REAL WORLD!

HII

WHIP

ONLY CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO GIVE UP JUST BECAUSE THEY "CAN'T DO IT"!

AND AMANO-KUN! THIS IS YOUR *JOB!*

THE LOWEST OF THE LOW!

YOU'RE THE WORST!

THE BOTH OF YOU HAVE REMOVED THE CHOICE OF "TRYING HARDER" FROM YOUR FLOWCHART!

peh

I'M THE ONE WHO CAN'T DEAL WITH...

I'M

POW

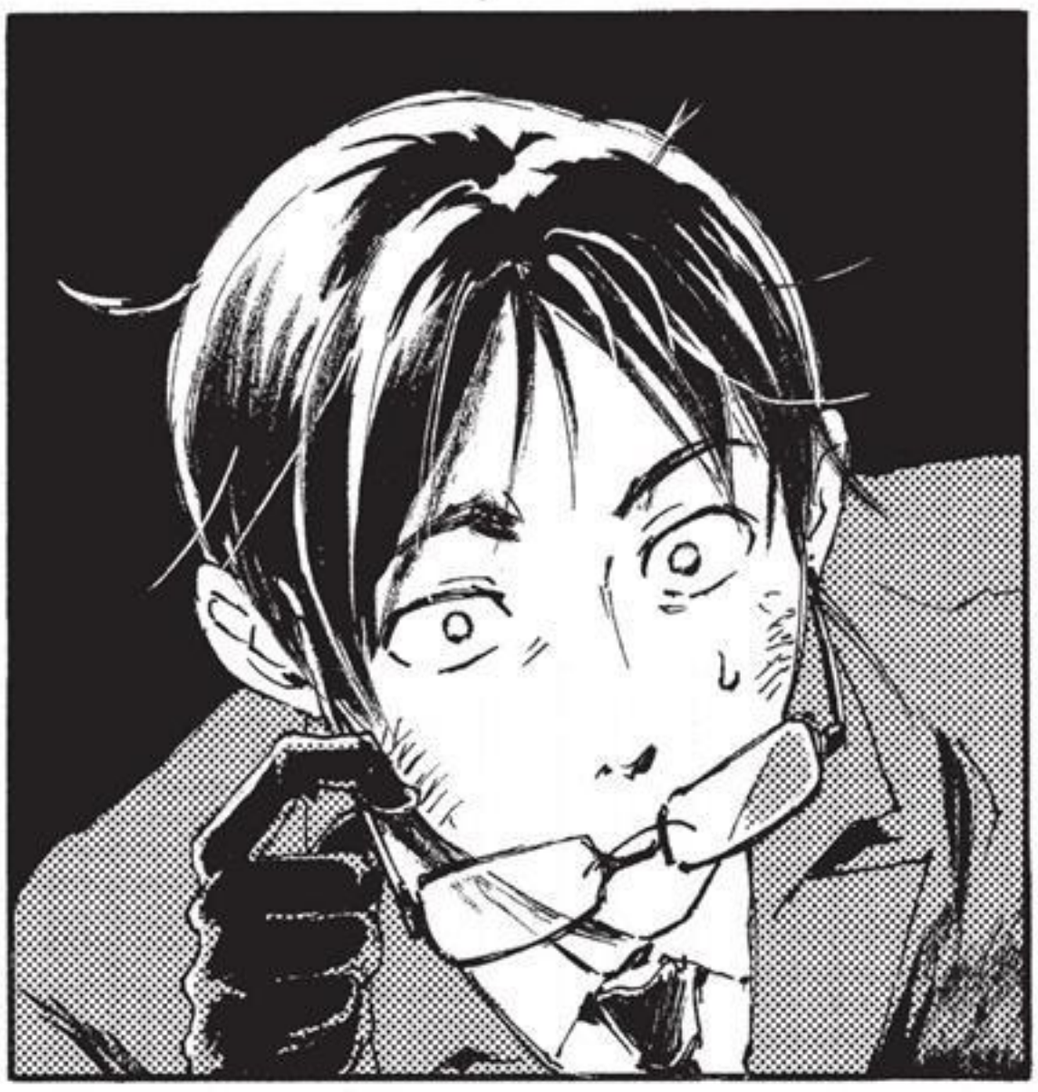
WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO TAKE THAT FROM YOU?

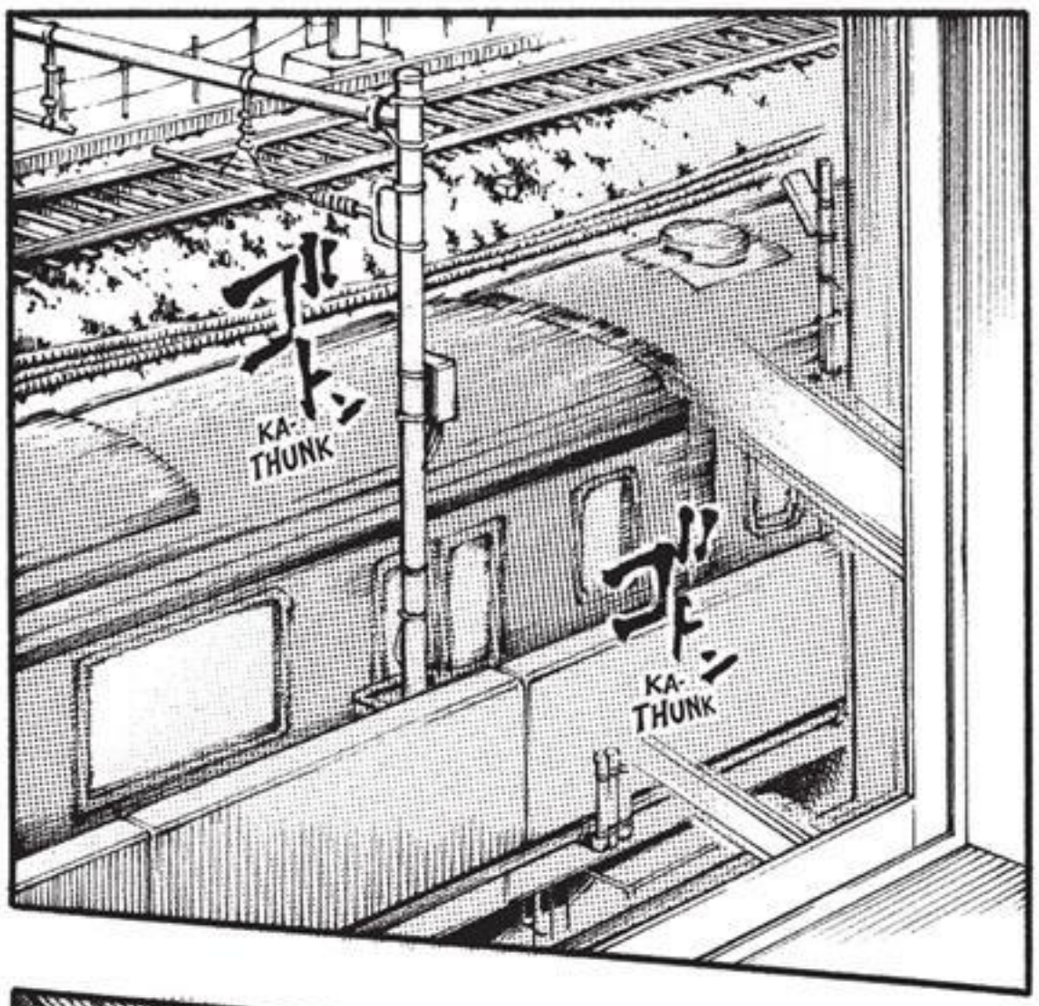
... WHAT THE HELL ?

...

JUST FELT RIGHT.

...THIS?




ゴトン
KA-THUNK
ゴトン
KA-THUNK


OKAY.


SO LET'S DO IT THEN.

...I GUESS.

I CAN GO ANYTIME.

AMANO-KUN.

ARE YOU READY?

ALL RIGHT, LET'S DO THIS WHILE THE BODY IS FRESH.

...

AS FAR AS ANYONE ELSE IS CONCERNED.

AS YOU WISHED, YOU WILL DIE,

ALL RIGHT, THEN, KANZAKI-SAN.

glance チラ

...UGH...

PUT MY SOUL IN HIM...?

TOO BAD. I ALREADY HAVE YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION.

urp

NO... WAIT.

I NEED TO PREPARE MYSELF EMOTIONALLY...

ZH

ZH

ZH

ZH...

N...

I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

...NO!

WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.

YOU WILL LIVE.

GLOW

DON'T FREEZE IT INTO A PSY-CHOLITH, AMANO-KUN!

DON'T LET ITS LIGHT GO OUT.

...!

IT'S HUGE!

IT'S NO GOOD.

huff

CON-SCIOUS-NESS... GETTING SUCKED AWAY...

CRACKLE

...UH-OH.

huff

huff

CRACKLE

huff

CRACKLE

I JUST CAN'T...

IT'S TOO BIG. I CAN'T HANDLE IT.

...!

DON'T RUN AWAY!

SNAP

OKAY!

KEEP IT LIKE THAT AND PUT IT INSIDE SAKUMA-SAN!

SLOW-LY!

LIKE YOU'RE PUTTING DOWN AN EGG!

ZH...

huff

huff

huff...

CAREFULLY LINE THE POLES UP WITH THE CORE AND SEW THEM TOGETHER.

huff

SFF...

...
HMPH!

BEEP
OH, IT WENT IN!

OKAY.
NOW IT'S ONLY A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN REVIVE SAKUMA-SAN'S BODY...

I'M GON-NA...

...HAVE TO...DO MOUTH TO MOUTH... AREN'T I?

...

だらー

DROOL...

ERK...!

DON'T RUN AWAY.

ウ

WOO

SWOO スゥ

OKAY, FINE!

JUST THINK OF IT AS KANZAKI-SAN...

EXCUSE ME.

WIPE

コ

WIPE

...?!

WHOA?! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!

THIS SOUL REALLY IS STRONG.

OKAY.

wipe

PHWA!

YEAH.

I'm tired.

wipe

NOW WE'LL TAKE HIM TO THE HOSPITAL.

GOOD WORK, AMANO-KUN.

MY BODY ...?

...WHAT?

I CAN'T MOVE MY BODY.

Is that...

...me?

A few days later...

記念病院


RATTLE
Sakuma, Ichiro
Yamamoto, Masayuki
CLACK
!!!...


...!
fsh... !!

...UN-FORTU-NATELY, NO.

...

SO IT WASN'T A DREAM.

ALL THOSE YOGA AND SPA TREAT-MENTS... WASTED.

Pat Pat

IF IT WERE A DREAM, I WOULDN'T BE IN THIS JOKE OF A BODY.

...OF COURSE IT WASN'T.

...DO YOU STILL WANT TO DIE?

I'M SORRY FOR PUSHING THIS ON YOU.

LIVING AS THE MAN I KILLED—THAT'S WORSE THAN GOING TO PRISON.

WE'D KILL YOU, DUH.

WHAT IF I SAID YES?

I'VE BEEN TOO SCARED TO LOOK.

HEY, BRING ME THAT MIRROR.

I LIKE YOU. YOU DON'T MINCE WORDS.

HA HA...

...

AH HA HA HA.

HEH...

...HEH HEH.

I WANNA DIE.

WE'LL COME KILL YOU ANY-TIME.

...

CALL US IF YOU EVER REALLY DO WANT TO DIE.

AH HA HA...

BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO LECTURE ME AGAIN.

THAT'S THE ONE THING THAT GIVES ME HOPE— KNOWING I CAN DIE AT ANY TIME.

HA HA.

SAKUMA-SAN'S SOUL ENDED ITS LIFE EXACTLY ACCORD-ING TO ITS PLAN.

FROM NOW ON, IT'S YOUR LIFE.

I PUT TOGETHER A FILE ON ICHIRO SAKUMA-SAN'S PERSONAL HISTORY AND ASSOCIATES.

WHAT? NO! I'M NOT WEAR-ING ANY MAKEUP.

MAY I TAKE ONE LAST PHOTO-GRAPH?

BE CAREFUL WITH MONEY.

HA HA.

IT'S YOUR SOUL I'LL BE PHOTO-GRAPHING.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

BEEP

PFFT.

YOU'RE CREEPY.

YOU SHOULD START TALKING MORE LIKE A GUY.

OH, RIGHT.

WELL, TAKE CARE.

I KNOW, OKAY!

Man Shimbun

Tokyo Stock Exchange 20 Points Down

Suicide Victim Suspected of Embezz-ling

Suicide Victim Suspected of Embezz-ling

Maybe her real fate was to spend her life in prison.

But in the end, she's imprisoned in a man's body.

When she accepts that as her fate, then she will be free.

SIGN (TOP): Hospital SIGN (BOTTOM): Surgery, Internal Medicine, Outpatients

Will she die again, or will she choose a new life?

At any rate, I'll be writing the account of what occurred.

RESTAURANT Danny's.

RESTAURANT Danny's.

THAT'S AN INTER-ESTING CASE.

BEEP BOOP

YEAH.

BEEP
pew
REALLY ?!
IT'S 72% ON TRACK.
THAT'S A NUMBER THAT CAN STILL BE REPAIRED.
pew
BEEP BOOP
HOW IS HER PLAN GOING ?
ANYWAY, ALL THOSE BEEP-BOOP SOUNDS ARE GETTING ON MY NERVES.
BEEP BOOP
pew
BEEP BOOP
AND HER LIFE EX-PECTANCY HASN'T CHANGED MUCH, EITHER.
SO, YEAH.
...IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, TOKIEDA-SAN.
...NO, MAYBE IT WAS SOME-THING *I* SAID.
p-
pew
BEEP BOOP
HEY!
AMANO!
ピロ DA- DA- DAAAH ロロロ
DWEEDLE DWEE
GAME CLEAR!!
SCORE 8963104
GAME

GIMME THE NEXT GAME, SAKURAI.

I BEAT IT.

ssssip

NOPE.

ssSIP

UM, TOKIEDA-SAN, MAY I BILL THIS TO LIVING-STONE?

How many have you gone through?!

AGAIN?! THOSE AREN'T FREE, YOU KNOW!

RESTAURANT Danny's.

RESTAURANT Danny's.

NNGH ...

BUT...

SAKU-RAIII! NEXT GAAAME!





Hello and good afternoon. I am Jinsei Kataoka, the manga artist for *Livingstone*. Thank you very much for picking up this book.

Living and dying are startlingly serious things, and I feel like that's exactly what makes them so hilarious. Tomohiro "Nice Guy" Maekawa-san's theatre troupe performed this story as a play, and it had various perspectives on life and death. I found it very thought-provoking. I don't know if I'm doing a good job, or if I did a good job, but I hope that, despite my lack of experience, I manage to pursue and express the humor in life and death.

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to those who helped with this manga: the character designer, Kazuma Kondō-kun; my editors, K-san, F-san, I-san; the production staff who stuck with me through my strict schedule; and Kawase-san who designed the super awesome cover.

Jinsei Kataoka

Translation Notes

Won't be needing the shoe, page 136
While this woman might simply be referring to the fact that dead people don't care much about footwear, she may also be alluding to the Japanese traditional belief that ghosts don't have feet. ff erefore, giving one a shoe would be quite silly, and perhaps somewhat insensitive.

Absconding agency, page 146
In Japan, there are agencies that help people disappear without a trace. ff ese agencies are especially helpful for women who need to get away from someone who might hurt them, such as a stalker or a violent husband or ex-husband.

Like how you took offk that shoe, page 148
In this scene, this woman's transition to her next life is likened to the ritual of removing one's shoes. What he is actually referring to is the custom of removing one's shoes before entering a home, a common practice in many East Asian countries. ff e entrance to many Japanese homes is raised higher than the entryway, so this is why Amano also calls it a "step up."



Tokieda's favorite drink, page 13
While we can't identify all the ingredients in this concoction, we know it contains cola, sweet potato shś chŵ, and ponzu sauce. Shś chŵ is a type of Japanese liquor, in this case distilled from sweet potatoes. It's strong, but not as strong as whiskey or vodka. Ponzu is a citrus-based sauce made from vinegar, rice wine, bonito ſakes, seaweed, and citrus juice. All those ſavors combined with whatever else he put in the mix are sure to leave a lasting impression.

New Year's cards, page 69
ff e holiday season is a time for sending greeting cards, and it's no diffkrent in Japan. But in Japan, the biggest holiday is the New Year, so that's the time everyone sends and receives cards from their friends. Apparently Sakurai-san only receives New Year's cards in the form of junk mail.

Y.K. Livingstone, page 121
Y.K. stands for *yŵgen kaisha*, which means "limited company" and is a type of limited company that existed in Japan until 2006, when they were replaced by *gś dś gaisha*, which are similar to American LLCs. ff is series started in 2009, so it would seem that Tokieda has not updated his signage in quite some time.

ff e Children's Limbo, page 122
ff e Children's Limbo, or *Sai-no-Kawara*, is a Japanese superstition about where children go when they die before their parents. Because they caused their parents so much pain by preceding them in death, they must pay for their lack of ijlial piety by building altars of stone on the bank of the Sanzu River (the river between this life and the next). ff eoretically, once the altar is complete, they will have paid their debt, but before they can ijnish, a demon comes along and knocks the altar down, causing them to have to rebuild again and again. ff us, the term "sai-no-kawara" has also come to refer to long and futile effkrts. Fortunately for the children, a Buddhist deity named Jizś will rescue them from their plight, but Sakurai may not be so lucky.

2

STORY BY
TOMOHIRO MAEKAWA

ART BY
JINSEI KATAOKA



FROM THE CREATOR OF *DEADMAN WONDERLAND*

LIVINGSTONE

HUFF.

HUFF ...

...I'M SORRY.

I'M SO... SORRY.

NO...

...IT'S OKAY.

GUNGSTONE 2

Chapter 6: The Pros and Cons of Attachment 1

Chapter 7: The Rewards of Cleaning Up Someone Else's Mess 41

Chapter 8: Time Capsule 81

Chapter 9: Creatures of Language 115

Chapter 10: Hospital-Acquired Infection (Part One) 161

Chapter 11: Hospital-Acquired Infection (Part One) 187

Episode 0 215



Story:
Tomohiro Maekawa

Manga:
Jinsei Kataoka

西緑鳥駅
NISHIMIDORIGORI STATION

4甲 東団地

Chapter 6 The Pros and Cons of Attachment

きゃっ squee

AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL? LUCKY!

WOW.

きゃっ squee

WHAT?! FOR REAL?!

BUT YOU'RE, LIKE, OUR AGE!

SHRUNCH

GARBAGE? YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

I HAVE A JOB.

LIKE GAR-BAGE COLLEC-TION?

?

I DO CLEANING AND COLLECTION AND STUFF.

...LIKE SHATTERED SOULS.

もえ

お

0日～ 御予約 承ります

POSTER: **Now taking reservations.**

LABEL: **Combustible trash**

OH! WE'RE GONNA BE LATE. SEE YOU LATER! ♡

サイイ… VRRR

AH HA HA! HE'S FUNNY!

PFFt

...WHAT IS THAT, A POEM ?

HEY! TRASH GOES IN THE TRASH CAN!

スタスタ skff

KSP-

LAT

GETTING HIT ON FIRST THING IN THE MORNING. YOU'RE REALLY SOMETHING, AMANO-

KUN!

Work

...HUH ?

IS... SOME-THING WRONG?

GLARE...

?

Aah!

WHERE ARE YOUR MANNERS ?!

WHY ARE YOU STARING AT HER ?

STAAAAARE

YANK

EXCUSE ME.

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ASAKO?

WOW. THAT LOOKS LIKE IT HURT...

NOTHING. WE'RE SORRY.

I JUST NOTICED SHE REEKED OF STAINS.

DIDN'T SEE ANY STAIN-BEASTS, THOUGH.

...IS THAT YOUR TYPE, AMANO-KUN? SOBER-LOOKING GIRLS LIKE HER?

HUH?

HMMM.

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT SOONER?! IT'S IMPORTANT!

Why should I?

I WISH I COULD HAVE CHECKED HER SOUL PLAN, JUST IN CASE...

A "soul."

It exists in the form of a stone.

To stop that vicious cycle...

...we clean the stains and collect the psycholiths.

But we can't be concerned with any one person's life or death, or for the good of society.

We're still pretty new at this.

AND SO...

The only standard we must uphold is the proper regulation of psycholiths.

And each of those psycholiths—those human cores—has a plan.

It becomes a negative point that will disrupt the plan of any who touch it.

Should someone's life take a wrong turn, causing them to die before their time,

the psycholith shatters and creates a stain.

IF THE GIRL FROM THIS MORNING HAS BEEN CAUGHT IN A NEGATIVE POINT,

THEN IT'S OUR JOB TO SAVE HER.

DONG!

SIGN: Nan'yo High School

murmur

murmur

SOME-ONE'S GONNA REPORT YOU, SAKURAI-SAN.

YOU LOOK *WAY* TOO SHADY.

HEY!

glance

glance

I *THOUGHT* SHE WAS WEARING THE UNIFORM FOR THIS SCHOOL, BUT...

?

Squee
Squee
Me too!
Give me your number!
YUP. AMANO-KUN RAN INTO A GIRL FROM HERE, AND...
HUH? KAE-CHAN. YOU GO TO THIS SCHOOL?
YUP.
WHAT'S UP? WORK?
IT'S PROBA-BLY JUST BECAUSE AMANO-KUN DOESN'T HAVE THOSE DESIRES.
Ah ha ha.
Is it so wrong to take life seriously?!
WAAAAH!
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?! I'VE NEVER HAD A GIRL COME ON TO *ME*! IS HE TRYING TO RUB IT IN?
UGH, AND HE'S GOT GIRLS ALL OVER HIM AGAIN!
KA-BAM
STRONG ATTACHMENTS AND STUFF.
LIKE WANTING TO BE POPULAR WITH GIRLS.
...WHAT DESIRES?
HMMM. HARD TO SAY WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT YEAR SHE'S IN...
?
OH.
AMANO SAID HE SENSED SOME STAINS ON HER.
MAYBE YOU KNOW HER? I THINK HER NAME WAS... ASAKO?
Ah ha...
SO? WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT A STUDENT FROM MY SCHOOL?
...HUH? ARE YOU SAYING THAT MY DESIRES ARE TOO OBVIOUS?

WELL, THERE WAS ALSO HER BOY-FRIEND.

HE LOOKED KIND OF BEAT UP.

LIKE THAT?

BINGO!

CLATTER

BEEP

BEE-BOOP

A VACANT APART-MENT ...?

!

102

入居者募集

ブルーハウジング

040-xxx-xxxx

SIGN: Now leasing

SWOOSH

NO!

HOLD ON, JUST LET ME SAVE!

THE WINDOWS HAVE BEEN SEALED UP! THAT'S NOT A GOOD SIGN.

WE'RE MAKING A FORCED ENTRY, AMANO-KUN!

CRASH

WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS...

TMP

CRUNCH

ZOM

?!

WHAT IS THIS? IT'S OVER-WHELM-ING...

...URP!

...THERE'S WAY TOO MANY OF THEM.

I CAN'T EVEN PUT MY FOOT ON THE GROUND WITHOUT STEPPING ON ONE.

kee!

SQUISH

kee!

kee!

SQUISH

CLATTER

!

GASP

YOU TWO ARE IN, UM...

WE'RE NOT THE POLICE, WE'RE NOT BURGLARS, AND WE'RE NOT PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.

RUSTLE

...WAIT.

IT'S ALL RIGHT— DON'T RUN FROM US!

ENVELOPES: **Suicide note**

...YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELVES, AREN'T YOU?

...I GUESS IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS.

?!

SNAP

SNAP

IT IS.

YOU'RE THAT WHITE-COLLAR CREEPER WE RAN INTO THIS MORNING!

NOTE: First impression

hee hee hee hee!

AH!

YOU'RE ...

WHAM!

WHAT ARE YOU TAKING PICTURES OF US FOR?!

OH, I'M USING THIS CAMERA TO CHECK YOUR PLANS...

SHOCK

CREEPER?

YOU'RE THE HOT GUY EVERYONE AT SCHOOL'S TALKING ABOUT!

NOTE: First impression

heh heh heh heh.

OH...

I MET YOU THIS MORNING TOO...

...WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE WANT?

WHAAAT!!

WE'RE NOT HERE TO STOP YOU FROM KILLING YOURSELVES.

WE'LL MAKE THINGS EASIER BY KILLING YOU.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SOLEMNLY SWEAR THAT YOU RENOUNCE THE LIVES YOU'RE LIVING RIGHT NOW.

SO WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION.

WE CAN MAKE IT NICE AND PAINLESS.

WE'RE SOUL COLLECTORS.

S...

SOUL...?

bee-
beep

!

WE DO ?

LEARN THE PRO-CEDURES ALREADY!

WE HAVE TO ANALYZE THE CAMERA'S DATA FIRST!

EXCUSE ME, AMANO-KUN! YOU CAN'T GO AHEAD WITH THIS YET!

FLUCTUATION

660028 HOURS

PLAN FIDELITY RATE-79%

FLUCTUATION

525661 HOURS

PLAN FIDELITY RATE-53%

...I KNEW IT. THIS SUICIDE ISN'T PART OF THE PLAN FOR EITHER OF THEM.

RATTLE

RATTLE

SHHH

SHHH

SHHH

The boy's fidelity rate is high enough that it can still be fixed.

But...

...the girl's plan is too far off course!

ghee!

ghee

psh

BUT...IS THAT REALLY THE RIGHT CHOICE?

Logically, the best solution would be to end the girl and convince the boy to live.

GLOW

GLOW

CLATTER

DAMN, THAT'S A LOT.

FWAH

WHEW.

THAT FEELS SO MUCH BETTER.

KRAK コキ

!

IT *DOES* FEEL BETTER ...

ARE YOU... PSYCHICS, OR SOME-THING?

?

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN CALL IT CLEANING WHEN YOU LEAVE GRAFFITI, THOUGH.

CLATTER

IT'S CALLED TAGGING!

I JUST CLEANED THE STAINS, THAT'S ALL.

DIDN'T I TELL YOU? WE'RE PSYCHOLITH COLLEC-TORS.

UH-HUH...

THIS APARTMENT DOESN'T BELONG TO EITHER OF YOU, DOES IT?

102

入居者募集

LOOK AT THEM. THEY SEEM TO BE JUST A COUPLE OF GOOD STUDENTS IN LOVE.

SO ...

SIGN: Now leasing

ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO...

WHEN DID YOU START USING IT?

IT'S BEEN EMPTY FOR AGES.

...I'M SORRY. THE WINDOW WAS OPEN, SO WE LET OURSELVES IN.

WHAT DO YOU DO? THERE'S NOTHING IN HERE.

HEH.

NOT *EVERY* DAY, BUT A LOT...

EVERY DAY?

IRK

...

...

I...

I MEAN... WITH ALL THESE PITCH BLACK PSY-CHOLITHS, ANYBODY WOULD GO CRAZY IF THEY CAME HERE ALL THE TIME, BUT...

RATTLE...

...AND WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO COMMIT SUICIDE?

I...DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME...

I LOVE MIYAHARA-KUN SO MUCH.

BUT I KEEP TRYING TO KILL HIM.

...

IS THAT HOW YOU GOT THOSE INJURIES?

WHAT ?

DOING WHAT?

MRPH

A LITTLE WHILE AGO... ASAKO STARTED RANDOMLY ATTACKING ME.

...WHILE WE WERE DOING IT.

AND I THOUGHT, "I HAVE TO KILL THIS MAN"...

IT WAS LIKE...I JUST STARTED HATING HIM...

THREE DAYS AGO, I ALMOST DID KILL HIM.

I'M...SO SCARED.

I'M AFRAID OF MYSELF.

...I WAS GOING TO GO WITH HER.

BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO LET HER DIE ALONE.

SO...

I JUST... WISHED I WOULD DIE.

WHAT DOES THE CAMERA SAY?

...I SEE.

THE BOY-FRIEND IS DOING OKAY.

...BUT THE GIRL'S PLAN IS TOO FAR OFF COURSE.

...THIS NEGATIVE POINT WAS PROBABLY CREATED BY A WOMAN'S SOUL.

THAT'S WHY IT AFFECTED HER SO STRONGLY.

All right!

YOU GO HOME AND WATCH TV OR SOME-THING.

SO WE JUST NEED THE GIRL TO DIE, RIGHT?

OKAY.

NO! WE'VE MADE UP OUR MINDS! WE'RE GO-ING TO DIE TOGETHER!

PLEASE JUST LET US DO THIS!

!!

?

...HEY. WHAT'S YOUR DEAL?

...″I MIGHT KILL MY BOYFRIEND, SO I'M GONNA KILL MYSELF″...?

...″IF MY GIRLFRIEND'S GOING TO DIE, I'M GONNA DIE WITH HER″...?

WHAT A PAIN IN THE BUTT.

YOU'RE BASING YOUR OWN LIFE AROUND THE DEATH OF SOMEONE ELSE? IS THAT NORMAL?

...HE'S RIGHT. IT IS WEIRD.

...

EVEN THOUGH YOU MAKE A GOOD POINT, AMANO-KUN, LOGIC HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS. THIS IS ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN.

IF THEY DIDN'T, THEN NEGATIVE POINTS WOULD NEVER EVEN EXIST.

PEOPLE DIE BECAUSE THEY HAVE THOSE ATTACH-MENTS.

Make it snappy.

I KNOW, RIGHT?

SO LET'S GET THE GIRL'S PERMIS-SION...

BUT,

IF PEOPLE DIE BECAUSE THEY HAVE ATTACH-MENTS...

...NO.

HUH? I DON'T GET IT.

SO WE'RE GONNA HAVE BOTH OF THEM DIE?

...THEY COULD ALSO LIVE BECAUSE OF THEIR ATTACHMENTS.

...ASAKO-SAN.

...HERE WE GO AGAIN.

Ughhh

...WHAT?

Hey.

...SAKURAI. ARE YOU FORGETTING YOUR JOB?

NO.

I HAVE A FEELING THAT IF SHE DIES, HER BOYFRIEND'S PLAN'S FIDELITY RATE WILL CRUMBLE EVEN FURTHER.

BECAUSE OF HIS "ATTACHMENT."

EVEN CONSIDERING PROPER PSYCHOLITH MANAGEMENT, I BELIEVE WE'LL EITHER NEED TO DISPOSE OF BOTH OF THEM OR LET THEM BOTH LIVE.

AND YOU... THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU DYING WITH HER.

...THINK ABOUT IT.

DON'T GO STRAIGHT TO THE WORST OPTION. DOUBLE-SUICIDE IS NOT THE ANSWER.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE AFRAID, AND YOU WANT TO ESCAPE THAT FEAR THROUGH DEATH.

BUT YOU'RE BRINGING YOUR BOYFRIEND DOWN WITH YOU. DON'T YOU HAVE ANY COURAGE AT ALL?

COURAGE TO LIVE ON AND CONQUER YOUR FEAR?

IF YOU DO, THEN YOU'LL NEVER SUCCUMB TO THOSE VIOLENT URGES AGAIN.

LISTEN TO ME. YOU ARE NEVER TO COME NEAR THIS APARTMENT AGAIN.

FOLLOW THE RULES, BEHAVE YOURSELVES, AND TAKE YOUR LIVES BACK ONE STEP AT A TIME.

...THE FACT THAT YOU ALMOST KILLED HIM, AND THAT SHE ALMOST KILLED YOU, MIGHT BE HARD TO BEAR.

...YOU'RE NOT CARRYING THE BURDEN ALONE.

BUT...

WE GUARANTEE IT.

YOU CAN OVERCOME IT AS LONG AS YOU'RE TOGETHER, RIGHT?

OH, AND ...

RIGHT!

STOP HAVING SEX LIKE FILTHY MONKEYS! IT'S FORBIDDEN!

DU-

DUN

ハハSL ガム・

...

OH, GOOD MORNING.

What are you grinning about?

I TOLD YOU, YOU LOOK SHADY!

?

WHAT IS THAT? AN EXCUSE FOR WHY GIRLS DON'T LIKE YOU?

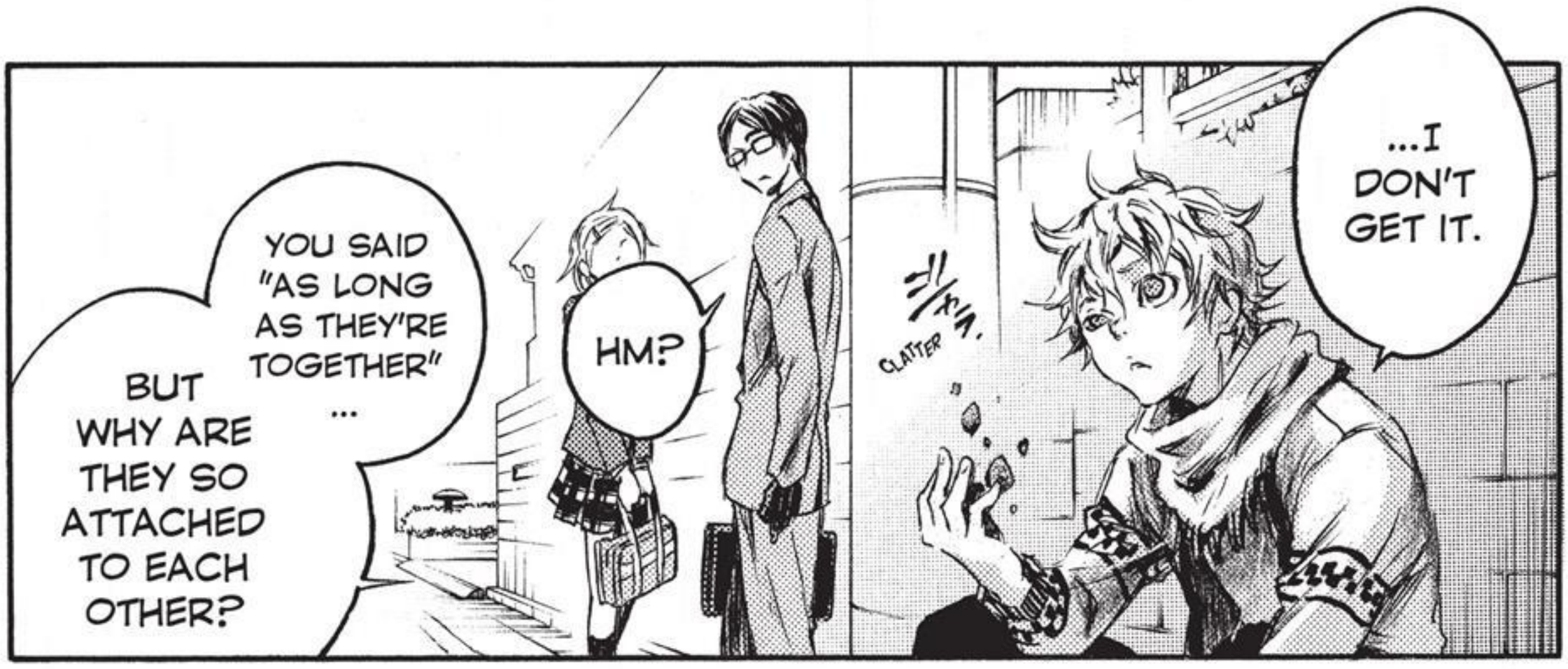
NOW, SEE HERE!

ATTACH-MENT IS WHAT MAKES US HUMAN.

...YOU WERE RIGHT, KAE-CHAN.

SIGN: Nan'yo High School




YOU SAID "AS LONG AS THEY'RE TOGETHER" ...
BUT WHY ARE THEY SO ATTACHED TO EACH OTHER?
HM?
CLATTER
...I DON'T GET IT.


See?
ALL THESE HUMANS LOOK PRACTICALLY THE SAME.
THAT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE WEARING UNIFORMS!


CLK
YOU THINK SO?


YOU SURE THEY'RE NOT THE SAME ON THE INSIDE, TOO?

Chapter 7 The Rewards of Cleaning Up Someone Else's Mess





013/078

Any cop worth his salt is going to deal with his share of weirdos…

OH?

ARIMA-SAN.

…but some of them are just off-the-charts bizarre.

YO.

YEAH, YOU KNOW.

I'M INVESTI-GATING THE SCENE OF A HIT AND RUN.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

HE GOT SCARED AND TURNED HIMSELF IN.

APPARENTLY SOME GUY HIT A DRUNK LYING ON THE ROAD.

WE'VE ALREADY TAKEN THE BODY IN.

YEAH.

IS HE DEAD ?

IT'S A JOINT INVESTI-GATION.

Huh ?

BUT YOU'RE NOT A TRAFFIC COP, ARIMA-SAN. YOU'RE A DETECTIVE.

HUH ...

9

A

5

THERE AREN'T ANY STAINS.

...OR HE DIED SOMEWHERE ELSE BEFORE GETTING HIT.

EITHER THAT ...

...OH.

SO HIS DEATH WAS DESTINY.

That's right. These guys ...

…hear the voices of the dead.

HMMM.

SIGN (LEFT): **Accident prevention** SIGN (RIGHT): **Keep our town safe**

CLACK

CLACK

SIGN: **Criminal Investigation Division**

WHAT WAS?

HE WAS DEAD BEFORE HE GOT HIT!

RUSTLE

IT WAS JUST LIKE YOU SAID, ARIMA-SAN!

THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS A SMALL STAB WOUND TO THE THROAT.

THE CAR ACCIDENT WAS POSTMORTEM. SOMEONE MUST HAVE KILLED HIM AND TOSSED HIM ON THE STREET.

HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WASN'T JUST A HIT-AND-RUN?

THAT'S SOME INTU-ITION!

ANYWAY, NOW THIS IS A MURDER AND BODY DUMPING CASE.

WHICH MEANS WE HAVE MORE WORK TO DO?

...DETEC-TIVE'S INTU-ITION?

UU AH HA HA.

How did I know ...?

THUD

IT SURE DOES! HERE'RE THE FILES.

GOING TO PLAY HOOKY AGAIN?

ARIMA-SAN, WAIT ...!

slink slink

OH, I JUST REALIZED, I HAVE TO GO ON PATROL SOMEWHERE.

HE SURE IS. SOMEHOW HE MANAGES TO GET THE BEST CLUES.

BUT AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, I HAVE TO SAY, HE'S GOOD AT HIS JOB.

HE'S ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THAT.

BUT HE UNCOVERED THIS CASE. ...WHY WOULD HE AVOID IT?

HE'S A MYSTERIOUS GUY.

One week later.

...THOSE SCENES WHERE THEY SAY, "DRIVER, GET ME OUT OF HERE!" AND THEY DON'T CARE WHERE THEY GO?

HEY, DO YOU KNOW...

LIKE YOU SEE ON TV?

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED THAT TO HAPPEN TO ME.

I WISH SOMEONE WOULD SAY THAT TO ME.

AND IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL IF IT WERE A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN LIKE YOU.

WHAT ...?

VROOM

VROOM

THEY DO SAY...

...NO ROAD IS LONG WITH GOOD COMPANY.

I MEAN ...

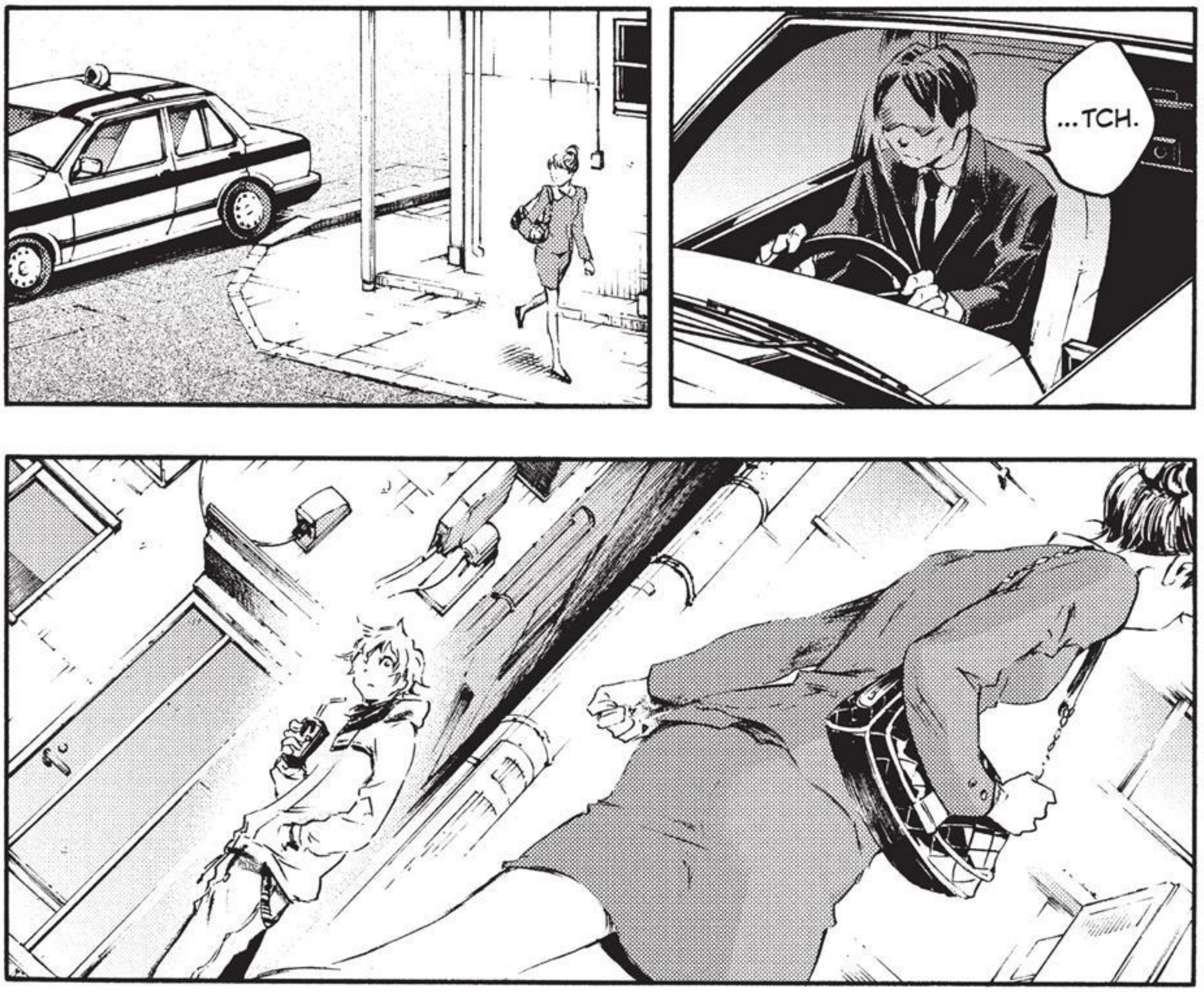
I...

VROOOOOOM

SHRIEK

I'LL GET OFF HERE...!

SHUT


...TCH.

!

...

I HAVE NO IDEA!

COME ON, SERIOUSLY, DON'T EVEN!

YES! HE JUST STARTED GOING FASTER AND FASTER!

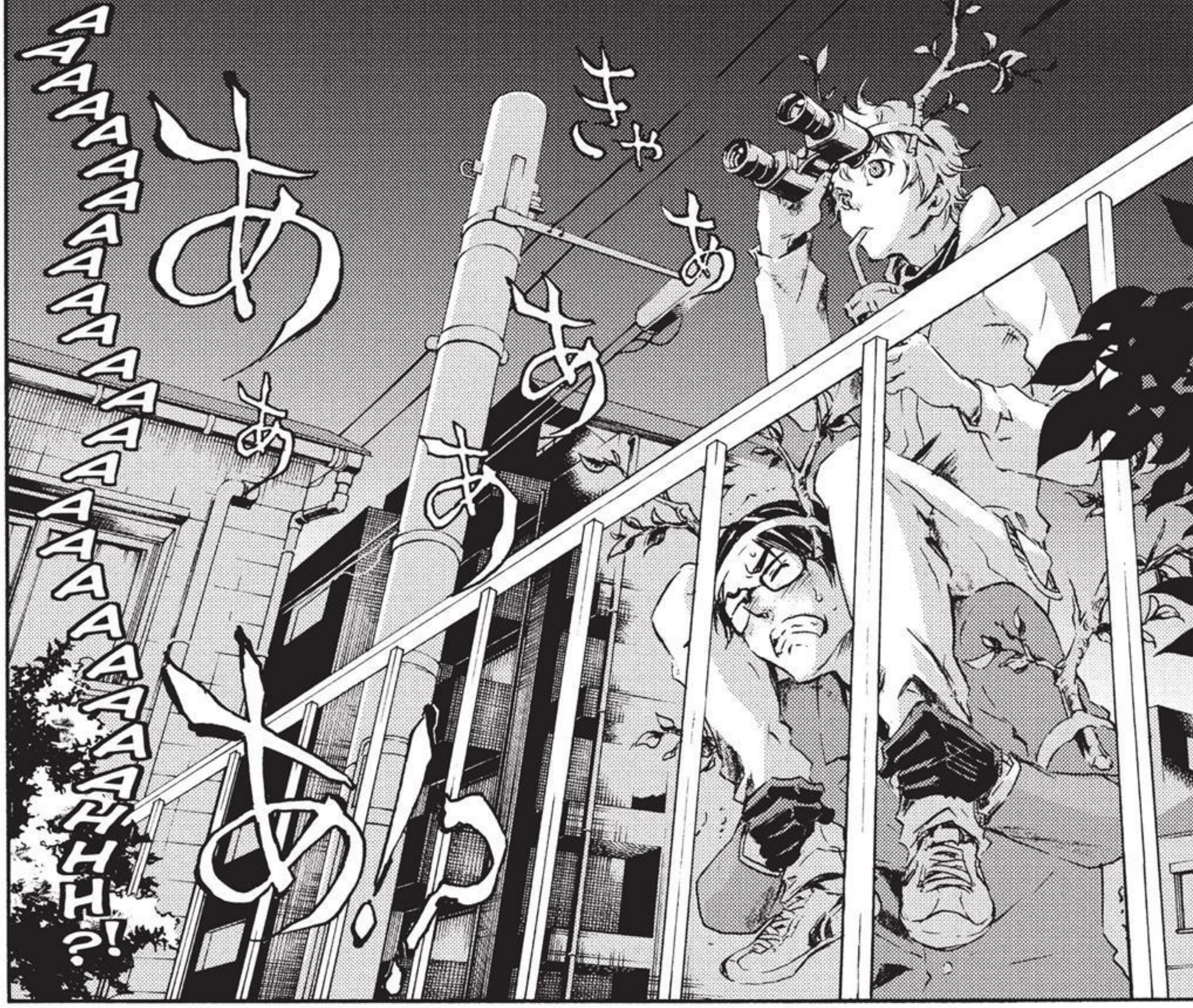
YOU'RE SCARING ME.

fsh

ニヤ…

gyoo.

gyoo.


AAAA

BEEP

DAMN IT! WHAT THE HELL?!

ARIMA SPEAKING ...WHAT?

KA-CLUNK

GT

RRRRING

!

spoomk

A TOTEM POLE STALKER?

110!!

← POLE

TOTEM →

WELL?

...YOU REALLY KNOW THESE MEN?

...YEAH, UNFORTU-NATELY.

...

DID YOU FIND ONE?

NO... NOT EVEN AFTER STALKING HER.

APPARENTLY THERE WERE SOME STAINBEASTS HANGING ONTO THIS WOMAN.

WE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE A NEGATIVE POINT SOMEWHERE IN HER RANGE OF ACTIVITY.

HER BUTT? UH...

...WHEN SHE GOT OUT OF THE TAXI THIS MORNING, THEY WERE ALL OVER HER BUTT.

BUT...

...DOESN'T THAT MEAN THE SEAT IN THE TAXI WAS DIRTY?

WELL...

WHY SHOULD I?

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT CRAP. I'M BUSY BOWLING.

Huh?

...OH!

CAN YOU USE YOUR POWER AS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE TO IDENTIFY THE TAXI?

...!

Well, it's true the rewards of cleaning up their messes are not insignificant.

AND THAT'S THANKS TO THE INFORMATION *WE* GIVE YOU, RIGHT?!

I THOUGHT WE HAD A GIVE-AND-TAKE RELATION-SHIP!

...ERK!

COME ON, DO YOUR JOB! YOU PASS YOURSELF OFF AS A GOOD DETECTIVE, DON'T YOU?

WELL, YEAH.

SIGN: Traffic rules keep us alive!

...FINE.

WHY THE TAXI?

YOU SAID SO YOURSELF, ARIMA-SAN.

It's not like I believe in all this soul business.

But these guys actually turn out to be right a lot of the time.

THE STAIN IS IN THE TAXI.

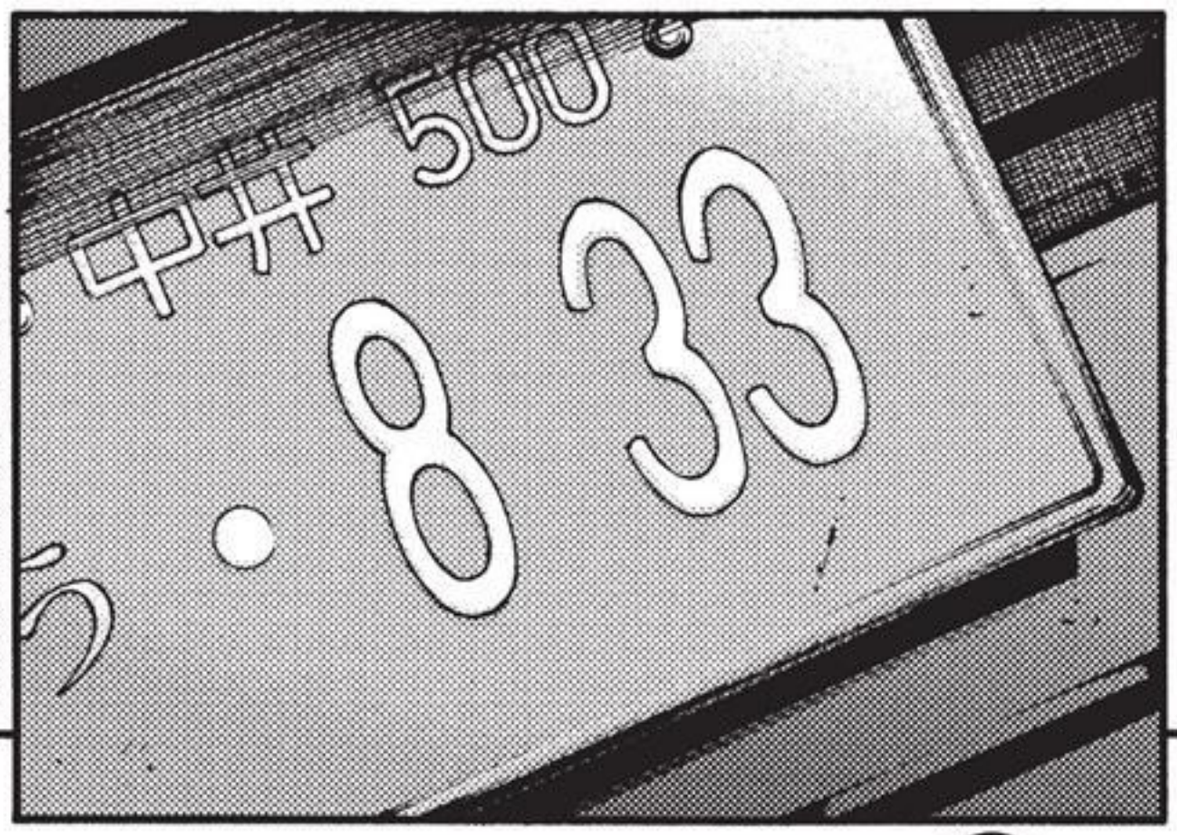
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S A MOBILE NEGATIVE POINT.

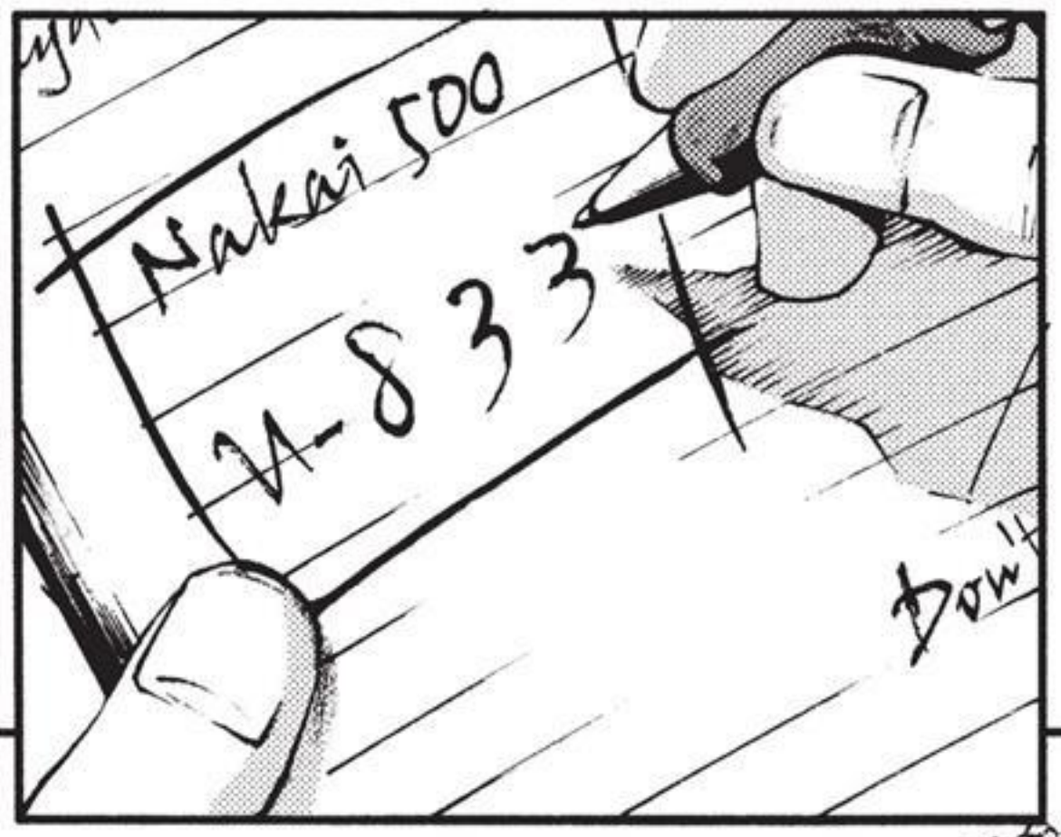
Maybe, instead of hiring more police officers, we should keep more of these guys around.

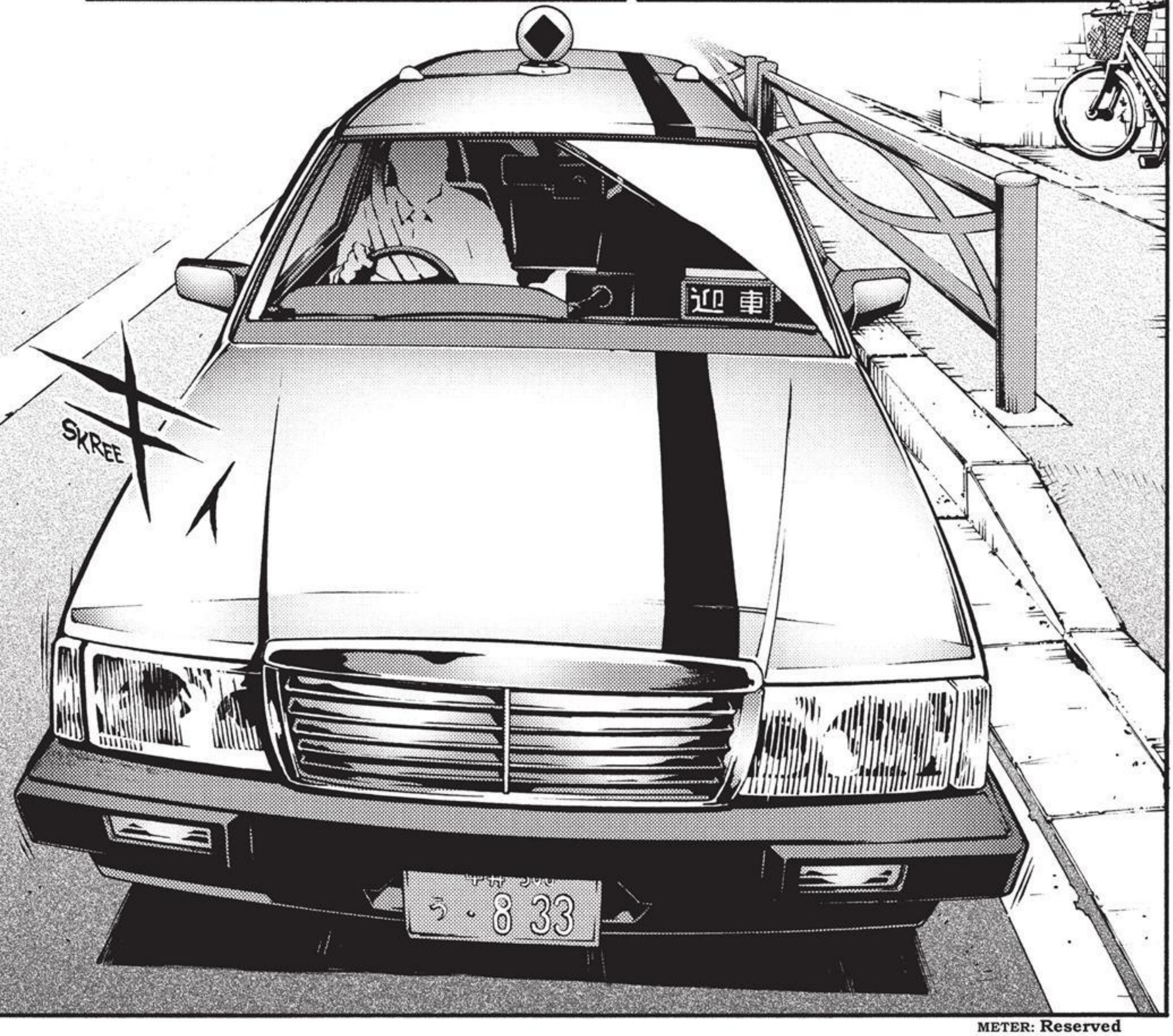
SIGN: KD Taxi

SIGN: Reception

LICENSE PLATE: Nakai 500 U 8-33







METER: Reserved



ARE YOU ARIMA-SAN THEN?

THE POLICE?

HAS ANYTHING ...UNUSUAL HAPPENED IN YOUR TAXI?

WHY WOULD ...?

OH, WE CAN TALK ON THE WAY.

HMMM ...

TAXI

...

...I'VE HEARD YOU'VE GOTTEN A LOT OF COMPLAINTS RECENTLY ABOUT RECKLESS DRIVING?

I DO GET A LOT OF UNUSUAL PASSENGERS IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE NIGHT ...

BUT I CAN'T REMEMBER EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM.

VRR

SO I DRIVE FAST... OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF MY HEART.

...IT COSTS MY PASSEN-GERS MORE MONEY IF I DRIVE TOO SLOWLY.

There's nothing especially out of the ordinary about the driver...

I SEE.

AMANO -KUN?

RATTLE

URP.


ZIZ
PSHHH


ARE YOU OKAY ?


AMANO-KUN!
WELL, THE PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH STAIN-BEASTS.
WHOA ?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK THERE ?!


IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?
...YES?

GLOW

CLATTER

HERE. STONES.

...What's with this guy?

Does that mean he's...

I'M GOING TO INVES-TIGATE.

TUG

...

ARIMA-SAN.

So what is their field of expertise, you ask?

RAT-

TLE...

OH.

hic TAKE ME TO HIGASHI NAKANO.

SCREE

UH, WAIT A SEC...

...

SAWA-MURA? FROM SALES?

THAT WAS A TOUGH BREAK WITH THE LAYOFFS. I ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED TO MY CO-WORKER AFTER THAT.

AHA, IT IS YOU!

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW!

hic!

OKAY! SO YOU'RE DRIVING A TAXI NOW!

ARE YOU DOING OKAY? YOU HAVE A QUOTA TO MEET, DON'CHA?

OF COURSE, I DON'T THINK A GUY LIKE YOU COULD MAKE A DECENT LIVING OUT OF *ANY* JOB!

AND YOU KNOW WHAT, AFTER MY PROMOTION, I QUIT SMOKING COLD TURKEY!

HEY, GUESS WHAT! I'VE BEEN PROMOTED TO SECTION CHIEF!

NOW I CAN SEE EVERY-THING THAT GOES ON UNDER ME!

SHUT UP.

OF COURSE, YOU BEING YOU, I BET YOU'RE NOT GETTING ALONG WITH THE MISSUS, EH?

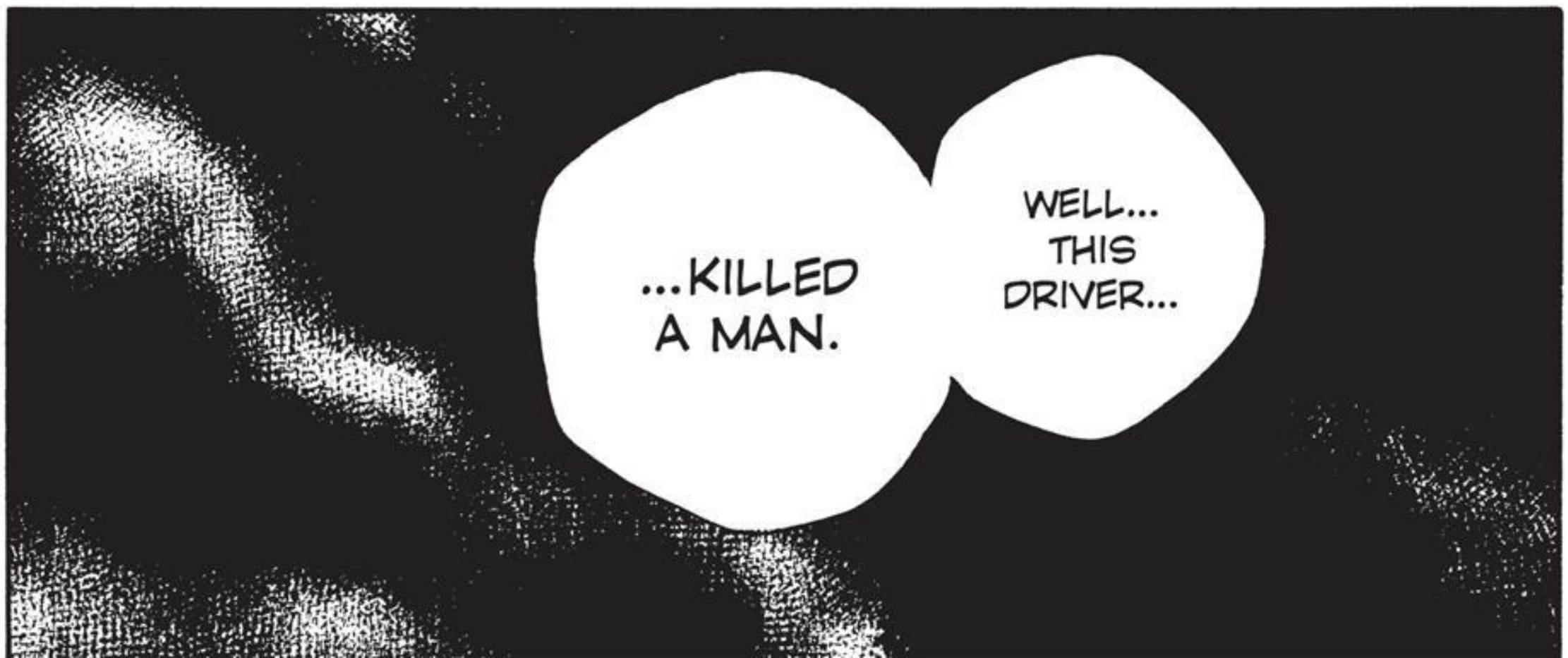
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LOOK LIKE I'M WORK-ING HARD.




ハラハラ


WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...?
?


RATTLE
HUFF
BLOOD... FROM HIS THROAT...
A BALLPOINT PEN...


...KILLED A MAN.
WELL... THIS DRIVER...

WHAM

HUH ?

...UH, THAT'S A ROCK. NOT A PERSON.

IT WAS DEFINITELY HIM... I HEARD IT FROM THE VICTIM HIMSELF.

?!

KA-THOONK

WELL ...

HEY... YOU'RE DRIVING LIKE A MANIAC ...

I WON'T HAVE AN ACCIDENT IF I DRIVE SAFELY, WILL I?

I CAN'T TAKE THIS LIFE ANY-MORE.

ALL OF THOSE THINGS HE SAID ABOUT ME... I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.

MY WIFE LEFT ME. I'M A LONELY MAN. YOU UNDER-STAND, DON'T YOU?

AT THE VERY LEAST, I DON'T WANT TO DIE ALONE.

NO, NO, WAIT, WAIT!

NO THANK YOU

GIVE ME A BREAK !!

WHOOOO

...SO, HEY.

Ah ha ha ha

LET'S NOT DO THIS. YOU DON'T WANT TO GET HURT, DO YOU?!

HE'S RIGHT. AND WHAT IF IT DOESN'T KILL YOU? YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE WITH THE AFTERMATH!

OOSH

HEY, I'M A COP. I SEE THIS ALL THE TIME.

BODIES FROM ACCIDENTS AREN'T PRETTY!

YOU WANNA DIE, RIGHT?

LET US TAKE CARE OF IT. WE'LL DO IT RIGHT, AND IT WON'T EVEN HURT.

WHOOOOOO

THERE WILL BE ZERO PAIN.

HEY ...

WE CAN'T DECIDE TO KILL HIS RECEPTACLE WITHOUT LOOKING AT HIS FIDELITY RATE...

...?

OSH

TWITCH

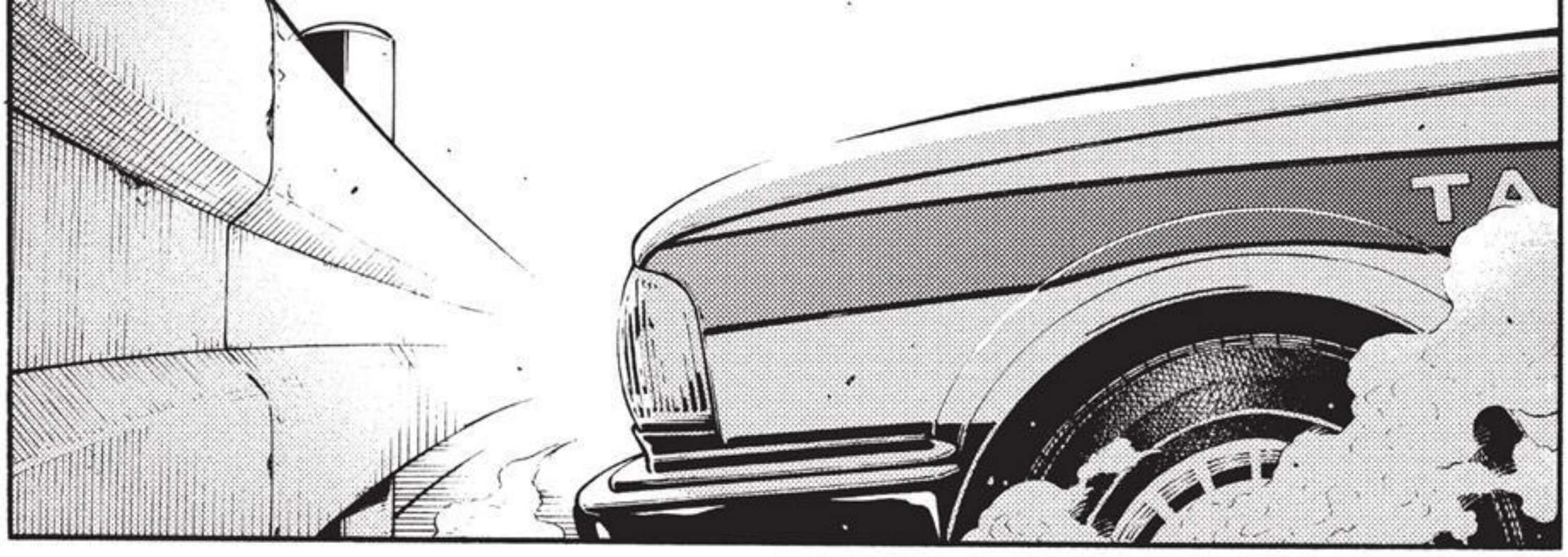
SKRCH

GUARANTEED.

WE WILL ...

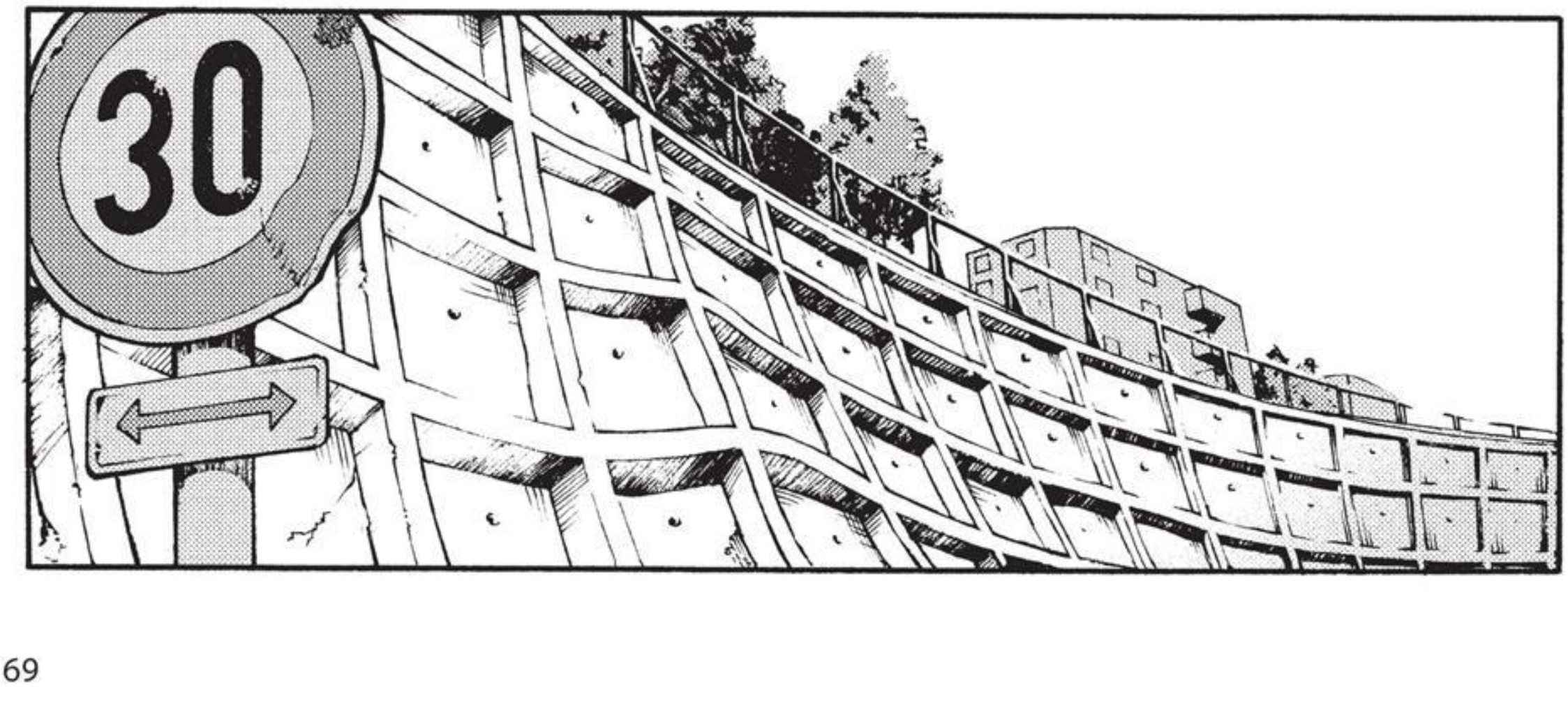
POW

...SAVE YOUR SOUL.


TA




...
...YOU WILL?


30

b

PROMISE US...

...YOU'LL GIVE UP ALL RIGHTS TO THIS LIFE.

WE JUST NEED YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION.

THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THIS MAN'S SOUL...

IT WOULD BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO RECOVER FROM SUCH A LOW FIDELITY RATE...

...

HE WILL DIE.

WE'LL REMOVE THE PSYCHOLITH, SAVING HIS SOUL.

WHAT A RELIEF.

ｻｯ

ｽｯ

SLUMP...

...WHERE TO...

...SIR?

...THIS GUY IS DEAD?

SO FROM YOUR GUYS' PERSPEC-TIVE...

...HE DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL.

I never believed in souls, but if the higher-ups say so, who am I to argue?

Once the soul is removed, a human can be disposed of like an object.

…with no possibility of murder.

…as a suicide or an accident …

My job is just to rule it…

When these guys leave a body behind, I make sure there's no investigation.

...

HE REALLY IS DEAD...

THUD..

HIS SOUL, EH...?

HIS SOUL IS ALIVE.

CAN A SOUL GO BOWLING?

?

…he had to be tried post-humously.

… led investigators to suspect the taxi driver, but as he had died of heart failure…

Some time later.

Information from Inspector Arima…

CAR: East 2

SIGN (LEFT): Accident prevention SIGN (RIGHT): Keep our town safe

RUSTLE

THEY SAY THEY FOUND A BALLPOINT PEN WITH THE VIC'S BLOOD ON IT IN THE TAXI.

LABEL: Solved

PLAYING HOOKY?

HEY, WHERE *IS* ARIMA-SAN?

I'M REALLY IMPRESSED. HOW DID ARIMA-SAN KNOW?

HE'LL PROBABLY JUST CHALK IT UP TO INTUITION AGAIN.

NAH.

I BET HE WENT OFF TO SOLVE SOME NEW CASE.

THUNK

RRROLL

WHOOSH

KA-CLUNK

BEEP

If you can't bowl, then that's not living.


If you ask me…
…It's our body that makes us human.

From the author

Sensibilities change subtly over the course of a few years. But I guess that's not so strange. So much has happened in society these last few years, and Kataoka-san, our editor, and I all had big changes occur in our own private lives as well. People's views on life and death change gradually as we grow older and gain more experience. I think a lot has happened to change Amano-kun's direction ever so slightly, especially in these last few years. Please stay with us to the end.

This turned out to be my first graphic novel in about four years. I want to thank all of the readers who showed your concern and asked, "Huh? Is it over?" When the series started up again, I'd forgotten so much that when I looked over my material, I would think, "Oh, I wrote this?" There were even some ideas that made me wonder why I thought they were so interesting. I would ask myself things like, "Considering how quickly things change these days, couldn't he use a smartphone instead of a digital camera," and "Was it really a good idea to make Amano's toy a first-gen Game Boy?"

Tomohiro Maekawa

From Niigata prefecture.

A writer and producer who writes slice of life stories that take place in supernatural settings. He has a wide range of work, from *Super Kabuki II* with Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, to works of modern theatre written in collaboration with Yukio Ninagawa.

Chairman of the Ikiume theatre troupe, his *Taiyou [The Sun]* won the grand prize in the Yomiuri Drama Awards.

Chapter 8 Time Capsule



SWOOSH

...SIGH.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP

7:20

THUD!

HAHAHA!

HAHAHA!

LOOK AT ALL THESE PSYCHO-LITHS YOU GOT FOR ME.

GOOD WORK.

...

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE...

TOKIEDA-SAN ...THERE IS NO HOPE TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THIS LINE OF WORK.

mutter mutter

I WANT TO JUST FORGET ABOUT MY JOB AND TURN INTO A SHELLFISH.

mutter mutter

A CRYSTALLIZED PSYCHOLITH.

OOH, THIS IS A RARE ONE.

A GUY COMES UP AND CUTS MY HEAD RIGHT OFF...

...ALL THESE SOLDIERS, JUMBLED TOGETHER IN A MESSY BATTLE.

POKE

POKE

YEAH, AND ITS MEMORIES SHOW UP IN MY DREAMS. IT'S HORRIBLE.

A LOT OF COLLECTORS SEEK THEM OUT FOR THEIR BEAUTY, BUT ONCE THEY GET THEM, THEY ALWAYS DISRUPT THEIR SOUL PLANS AND MAKE THEIR LIVES MISERABLE.

BUT YOU CAN GET A GOOD PRICE FOR A NATURALLY CRYSTALLIZED PSYCHOLITH.

HM, I SEE.

SO IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BIG HISTORIC BATTLES WHERE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE DIED.

IT'S HARD ON A GUY! GIVE ME SOME ADVICE! HELP ME MAKE IT BETTER!

COLLECTING PSYCHOLITHS AND READING ALL THOSE PAINFUL MEMORIES...

I'M THE ONE WHO'S MISER-ABLE!

JOUT

...I KNOW.

YOU DID PSYCHOLITH COLLECTION BACK IN THE DAY, DIDN'T YOU?

HMMM.. THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF STONES, YOU KNOW.

...NO, THANK YOU.

DU-DUN

THIS DR. PEPPER MAKGEOLLI BLEND WILL HELP YOU SLEEP.

LABEL: **Makgeolli**

HEY.

I DEAL WITH PSYCHOLITHS WHOSE PLANS HAVE BEEN DE-RAILED, AND THEY PRETTY MUCH ONLY HAVE BAD MEMORIES...

ARE YOU SURE ?

WHY DON'T YOU WEAR AN AMULET, TOO, SAKURAI-SAN?

WOW.

THAT'S PRETTY COOL.

YANK

?

OKAY, OKAY.

I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE KIND OF ADVICE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, BUT COME WITH ME. YOU MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING.

WE'RE GOING ON PATROL TO CHECK OUT ALL THE POPULAR CHARMSTONE VENDORS.

有限会社 リヴィングストン

VAN: Y.K. Livingstone

In a sense, psycholiths that find their way into the world are time capsules.

But sometimes a troublemaker will end up in the mix.

Most stones don't do any harm, or any good for that matter.

KREE

YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY THOROUGH.

WHAT MAKES YOU SO PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR WORK?

... HMM.

THAT'S WHY I COME AROUND EVERY SO OFTEN, TO MAKE SURE THERE AREN'T ANY PSYCHOLITHS ON SALE.

STONEHENGE

STONEHEAR

?

WELL...I DON'T ONLY DO IT BECAUSE IT'S WORK.

YEAH, YEAH.

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

AMANO-KUN... STOP LOOKING FOR GAME ITEMS AND LET'S LOOK FOR REAL PSYCHOLITHS.

IF YOU GOT ANYTHING GOOD.

LET ME SEE YOUR INVENTORY.

COMING RIGHT UP.

Ha ha.

Hi.

STON

HERE TO BUY SOME STONES, TOKIEDA-SAN?

SIGN (RIGHT): **Moonstone 420 yen**
SIGN (LEFT): **Tiger's Eye 790 yen**

20% OFF

¥10,000

SIGN: **Best seller #3!!**

EVERY-
THING'S
SO MUCH
PRETTIER
THAN AT
OUR
PLACE.

Ooh.

...WHAT'S
THAT?

BUT FOR SOME REASON... I JUST FEEL BETTER WHEN I'M WEARING IT.

OH, THIS?

DAD GAVE IT TO ME A LONG TIME AGO.

Ah ha ha!

I KNOW, IT'S KIND OF PLAIN.

SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME.

...HMMM.

CLEARANCE SA

HEY THERE, HAND-SOME.

しゃらん・
RATTLE

SHE'S A STRANGE LITTLE GIRL

OH, THIS IS MY GRAND-DAUGHTER.

SHE'S ONLY FIVE, BUT SHE LOVES TO COLLECT STONES.

WAS THAT... THE GIRL ...?

HUH ?

RATTLE

しゃら

...

HOW'D IT GO TODAY? DID YOU FIND ANY GOOD STONES?

IF YOU HAVE TIME FOR CHIT-CHAT, THEN YOU CAN GO FIND US SOME NEW CUSTOMERS!

QUIT YER YAPPIN'.

HA HA.

I'LL GO GET OUR NEWEST ARRIVALS FOR YOU TO LOOK AT.

I'M SORRY. I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SHE LEARNED THAT.

HEY, HAND-SOME.

EEP ?!

TSS...

COME ON OVER MY WAY.

I'LL TREAT YA REAL GOOD.

OKAY ?

NO PROBLEMS HERE, THEN.

GUESS WE'LL GET GOING.

T-T-TOKIEDA-SAN!

...WAS COMING ON TO ME... AND IT WAS EXTREMELY SEDUCTIVE.

BAM

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL...

IT WAS LIKE SOME-THING...

...FROM THOSE HIS-TORICAL DRAMAS... YOU KNOW.

SOME-THING IS WRONG WITH HER.

NO, NO, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.

A big problem...

THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, SAKURAI-SAN.

...!

A TIME CAPSULE!

RATTLE

LIKE A COURTESAN.

The saying goes, "Until age seven, they are with the gods."

It's easy for children to be drawn to the memories inside psycholiths without even realizing it.

YEAH.

BEFORE IT WARPS HER SOUL.

IF THE STONE IS CAUSING THIS, THEN WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT FROM HER.

CLAMP

WHAT ?

FAT CHANCE, *UGLY!*

HI, LITTLE GIRL!

WOULD YOU MIND LETTING ME BORROW YOUR JAR OF STONES?

SORRY ABOUT THIS.

IT'S JUST NOT SAFE FOR YOU TO HAVE IT.

YOINK

AH!

W—

WAAAAAAAH!

STONEHEAD

fsh

IT'S JUST, UM...

ER, UH, AH ...

WAAAAAH!

STOMP

STOMP

?!

H-HEY, WHAT HAPPENED ?!

Get it! Now's your chance!

PASS IT!

OVER HERE!

AMANO-KUN!

NOW SHE'S HER FIVE-YEAR-OLD SELF AGAIN, I GUESS?

GRAB

SWOOSH

OOF!

ZSHH

CLINK

SNEAK

WAAH!

WAAAAAAAAH!

There, there.

COME NOW, YOU CAN TELL YOUR GRANDPA.

STONEHEAD

SLAM

SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU!

有限会社 リヴィングストン

VAN: **Y.K. Livingstone**

VROOM

WHEW.

I'm tired.

HUH?

AMANO-KUUUN!

WHY?!

AH! THEY GOT HIM!

FORGET HIM! WE'RE LEAVING!

LEER

LONG LIVE VIRTUAL REALITY...

DON'T PUT THAT IN YOUR POCKET.

KONK

RUMMAGE

RATTLE

'COURSE THERE ARE.

I TOLD YOU, THERE ARE ALL KINDS.

WOW... SO THERE REALLY ARE PSYCHOLITHS THAT AREN'T DEPRESS-ING.

IF THERE HAVE TO BE BAD TIMES...

...THERE CAN BE GOOD TIMES, TOO, RIGHT?

A PSYCHOLITH IS AN ACCUMULATION OF A LIFE'S MEMORIES.

RATTLE...

I STAYED TO GET THIS.

THEY MADE ME PLAY WITH THAT LITTLE GIRL.

You're Filthy.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING, AMANO-KUN?

SPLITCH

ぴちゃっ

UACK ?

WELL, SHE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT TO HER.

GOOD JOB, AMANO-KUN.

KAE-CHAN'S AMULET ...

SHE DROPPED IT?

AND WHEN YOU LOSE SOMETHING IMPORTANT YOU GET "SAD," RIGHT?

YOU'RE ...

... STARTING TO TALK LIKE A NORMAL PERSON.

?

KAE-CHAN.

AMANO-KUN PICKED THIS...

ZAP

ZSHH

?!

SNATCH

...

DON'T LOSE IT.

SORRY, DAD.

WAS THAT...A YOUNGER TOKIEDA-SAN?

...AS A GENERAL RULE,

WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO KEEP ANY OF THEM.

BUT WHEN HER STONE SHATTERED, THAT WAS ALL I COULD FIND.

...YOU'RE STILL LOOKING FOR YOUR WIFE'S PSYCHOLITH?

...COLLECTING LOST MEMORIES DOESN'T MAKE THE "SAD" GO AWAY.

BUT I CAN FIGHT IT A LITTLE, CAN'T I?

I'M HUMAN, AFTER ALL.

There are good times and bad.

A psycholith is the memories of a life—a time capsule.

To someone else, they might just be dry facts, but to the one they belong to, they're cherished memories.

I'LL LOWER YOUR SALARY.

...

UH...

HUH ?

NO, PLEASE, NOT THAT!

...YOU WERE PRETTY HANDSOME WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, TOKIEDA-SAN.

STILL AM.

'BOUT WHAT ?

BEE-BOP BEE-BOP

...I GUESS I DON'T REALLY NEED TO THINK TOO HARD ABOUT IT.

NOTHING. I THINK I'M GOING TO SLEEP WELL TONIGHT.

Chapter 9 Creatures of Language





COME ON, MINORU...

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO FORGET ABOUT YOUR MOM UP IN HEAVEN.

BUT SHE LOVES YOU TOO, YOU KNOW.

EVERY DAY SHE THINKS OF YOU AND...

FLAP

CAW

CRO!

BEE-
BOP

BEE-
BOP

pew

KA-
ZHOONG

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

BEE-
BOP

BEE-
BOP

pew

BEEP
BEEP

pa-
pew

IT HAPPENS SOME-TIMES.

LIKE WHEN HE'S REALLY FOCUSED ON HIS GAME.

...WHAT'S GOING ON? IS HE THE BUDDHA OR SOMETHING ?

BEE-BOP BEE-BOP BEE-BOP

Please save us.

PRAISES BE, PRAISES BE.

WHOA !

OOOH!

THE STONE INSIDE AMANO SUPPOSEDLY ISN'T A HUMAN'S PSYCHOLITH.

SO MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING CLOSER TO AN ANIMAL'S.

HOW FREE FROM WORLDLY DISTRAC-TIONS CAN YOU BE?

Guess I'll take a picture.

DON'T ANIMALS HAVE SOULS?

NO.

THAT'S WHAT I WAS TAUGHT, ANY-WAY.

A PSYCHOLITH IS THE CODIFIED DATA OF A PERSON'S LIFE, SO TO SPEAK.

DATA IS BASICALLY LANGUAGE.

AND LANGUAGE IS HOW WE TRANSMIT THE KNOWLEDGE OF PAST EVENTS AND CREATE HISTORY.

ANIMALS CAN'T DO THAT, YOU KNOW?

HUH? BUT...

...DOGS CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT THEIR OWNERS TELL THEM, RIGHT?

AND I BET DOLPHINS AND WHALES HAVE A LAN-GUAGE.

plip

AND COME ON...

THEY SAY, "THE FLY HAS HER SPLEEN AND THE ANT HER GALL."

...HMMM...

MINORU !

...WE SAW THIS COOL ANIMAL DOCTOR GUY!

OH, BY THE WAY, AT THE RIVER ON OUR WAY HERE...

SCHOOL'S THAT WAY! COME WITH US!

LEAVE ME ALONE.

...

...I'LL PASS.

YEAH, BUT...

HUH? BUT THAT'S GOOD, RIGHT?

I HEARD THAT HE'S GETTING A NEW MOM.

HE'S BEEN WEIRD LATELY, RIGHT?

WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?

CAW?

CAW

CAW?

UGH, GET LOST!

SHOO!

SHOO!

CAW!

FWOOSH

FWOOSH

...I HEARD SHE'S A FOREIGNER.

WHAT?

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! WHAT PESTS!

FLAP

YOU'RE ALL ALONE, CRO.

JUST LIKE ME.

CAW

!

FWOOSH

WAH ?!

OH. THIS ONE'S NOT SCARED OF PEOPLE.

M...

MAMA!

THAT'S TRUE. PEOPLE USUALLY HATE CROWS.

BUT I LIKE THEM.

BUT MAMA... AREN'T YOU SCARED ?

IN STORY-BOOKS, THEY'RE ALWAYS WITH THE WITCHES.

AND CROWS ARE VERY SMART.

LOOK CLOSELY AT THE WINGS. SEE HOW PRETTY THEY ARE?

THAT COLOR IS CALLED RAVEN BLACK.

WOW...

CAW.

PAH

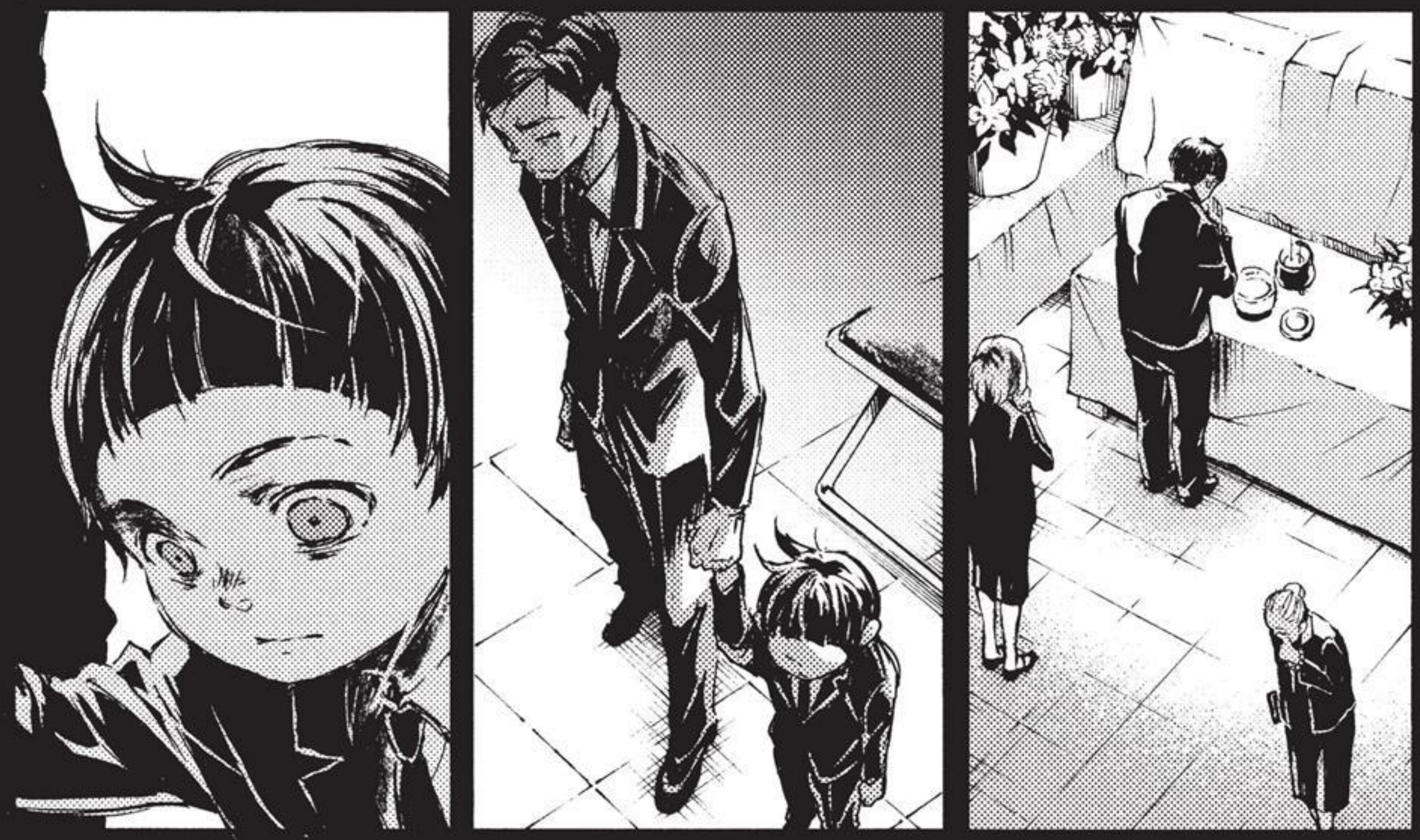
DO YOU WANT A HANGER FOR YOUR NEST?

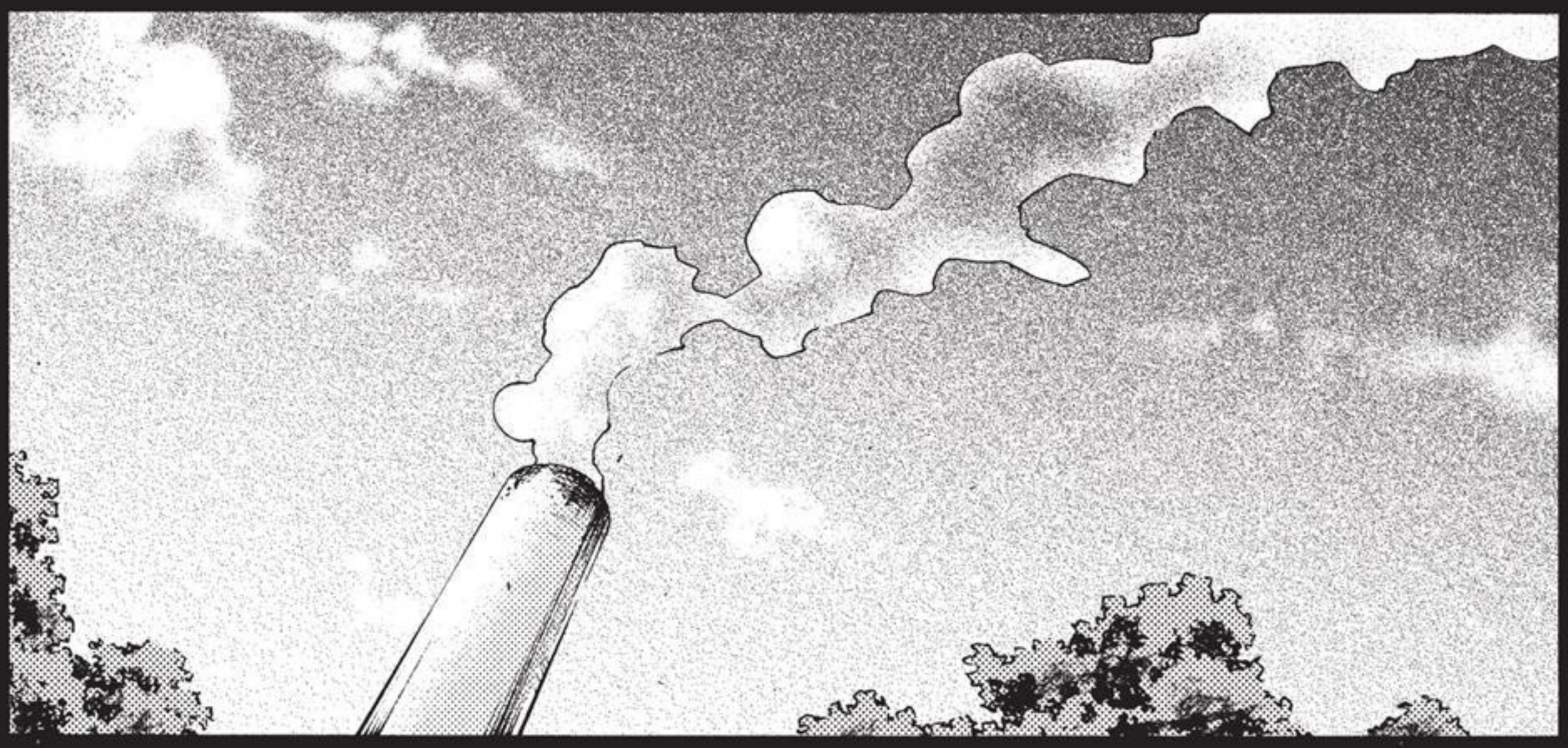
BUT THAT BEAR HANGER IS MINORU'S FAVORITE, SO DON'T TAKE IT, OKAY?

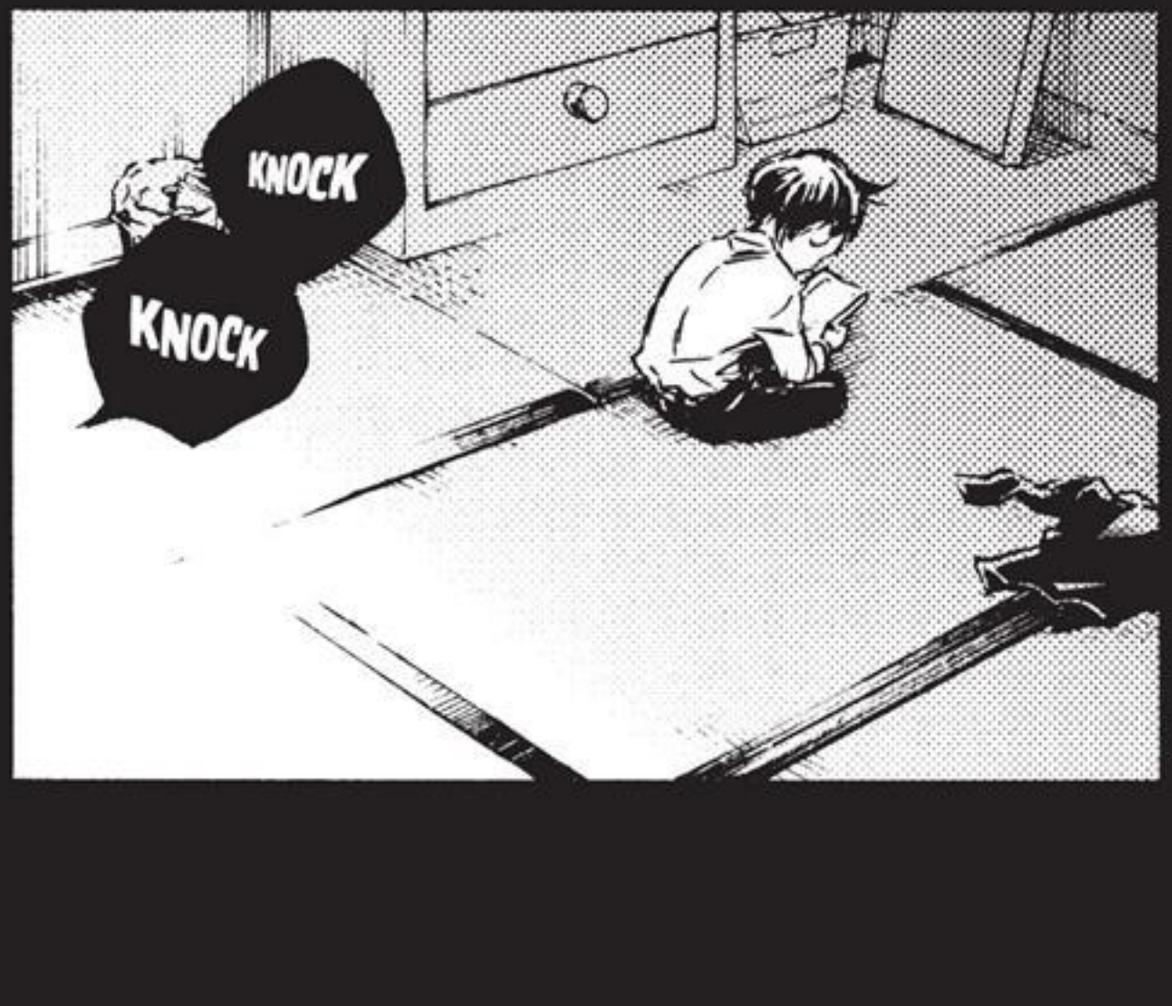
FWOOSH

YOU'RE RIGHT!

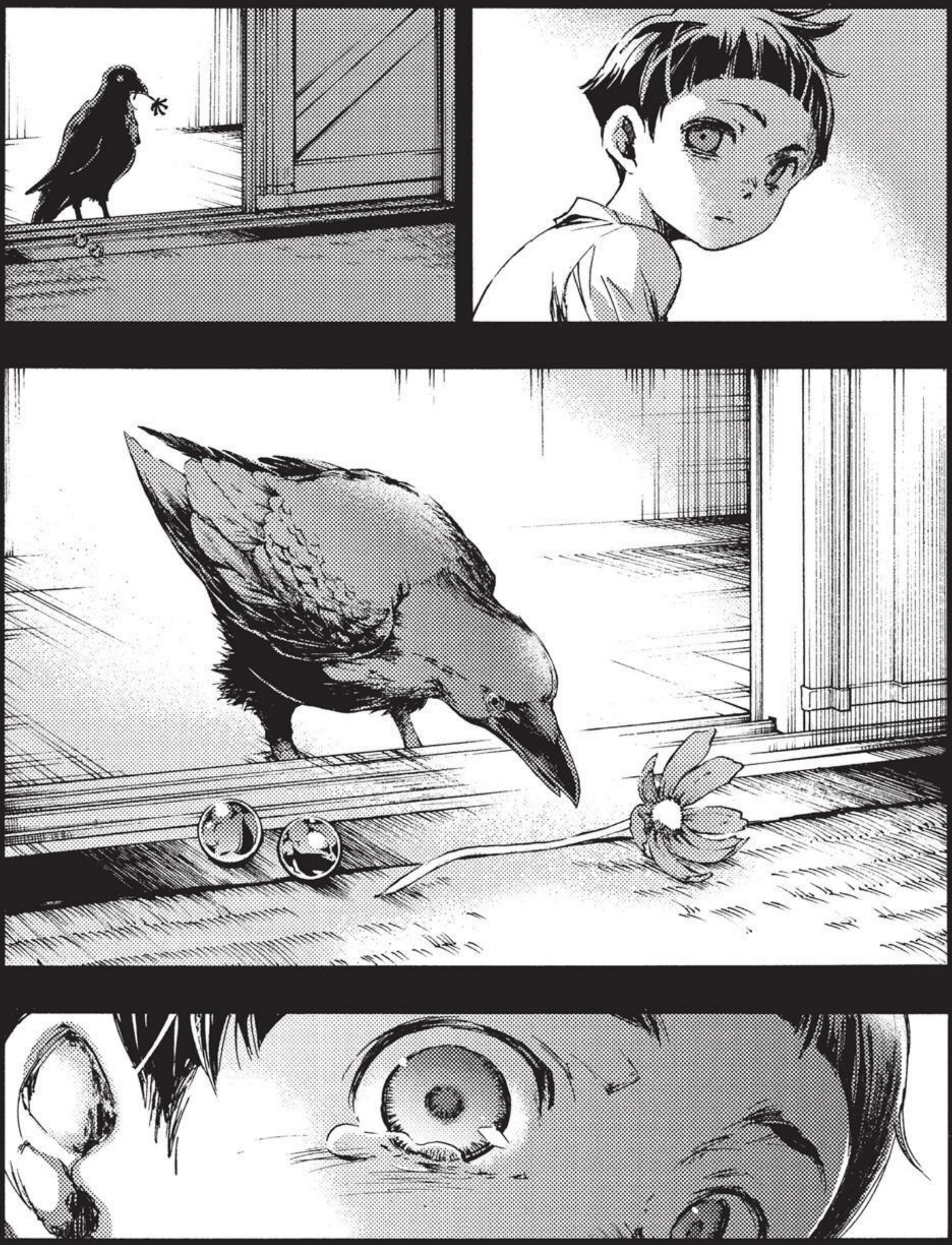
THEY ARE SMART!






KNOCK
KNOCK




CAW.

SHE'S A FOREIGNER. I HATE HER!

I JUST KNOW SHE'S SAYING BAD THINGS ABOUT ME AND MY MOM.

BUT I BET SHE JUST WANTS ME OUT OF THE WAY.

SHE TALKS IN WORDS I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

DADDY SAYS SHE LIKES ME.

Patter
Patter

CA-
CAW...

...
WHAT
WAS
THAT
?

MINORU-
KUN!

MINORU!

HUFF...

HUFF

HUFF

!

I ***...
VERY ***.

SO ***

I

*****
***...

TODAY *** TRASH DAY. WHEN I TAKE IT...

...GROCERY MAN TELL ME

MINORU *** NOT GO TO SCHOOL.

...!

!

BAM

SHUT UP!

RIP

OH.

THIS *** VERY OLD.

I BOUGHT *** A NEW ***.

SO NO PROB-LEM.

...Y-

YOU DON'T MESS WITH MY STUFF! I KNEW IT! YOU'RE NOTHING LIKE MY MOM!

WHAM

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING! I HATE YOU!

CAAAAAW!!

WHACK

?!

OW ...?!

FWOOSH

SPLAT

POOT

WHA...

WHAT THE... YOU, TOO, CRO ?!

I HATE YOU!

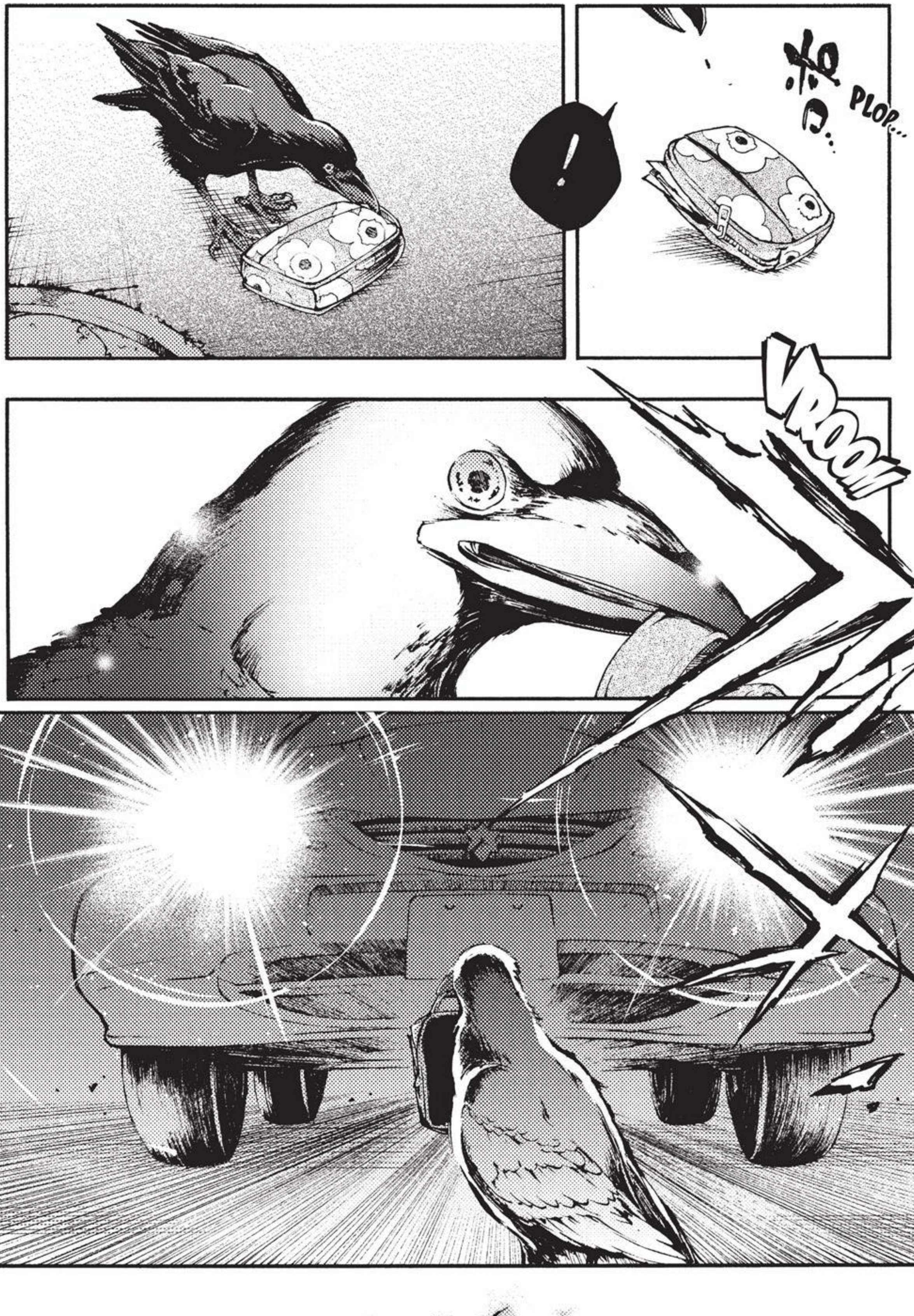
RATTLE

TUG

TEP
TEP

TUG

FLAP


PLOP...
!
VROOM

WHAM...

BEE-BOP

GAME BOY

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

RIBBIT.

RIBBIT.

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

RIBBIT.

SCRATCH

MEOW!

OW!

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

SPLASH

I FED YOU YESTERDAY! AND YOU DON'T EVEN REMEMBER ME!

Vicious beast, acting all cute.

MROWR!

ARGH!

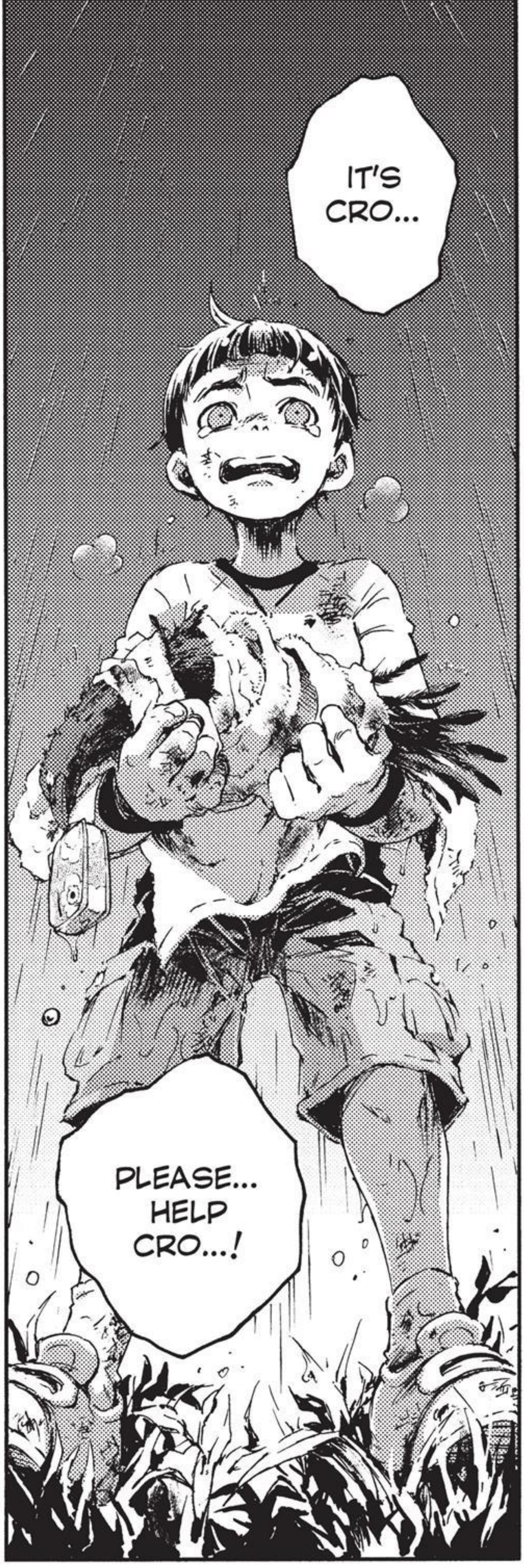
I KNEW THESE THINGS DIDN'T HAVE SOULS!

YOU'RE THE ANIMAL DOCTOR, RIGHT ?!




...A CROW?


WE... HAD A FIGHT YESTER-DAY.
BUT... IT'S MY FRIEND.
I DON'T WANT IT TO DIE.


IT'S CRO...
PLEASE... HELP CRO...!

...?

WHAT'S THAT IN ITS MOUTH?

DID IT GET INTO AN ACCIDENT?

I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN ...

HELP IT? WHY?

THIS CROW... ALREADY GAVE ME ITS SOUL'S PERMISSION.

THAT'S THE FEELING I GET.

SPLASH

SPLASH

WHAT?

YOU MEAN... IT'S ALREADY ACCEPTED ITS DEATH?

BUT... ANIMALS DON'T HAVE SOULS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? CARRYING THAT ANIMAL AROUND...

MINORU !

IT'S...

...! NO, DADDY...

....MINORU'S FRIEND, NO?

WHAT ?

IT IS HURT?

HURRY.

GO TO DOCTOR?

YES... IT IS.

IT'S MY FRIEND...

SHE'LL DIE FIRST.

YOU WON'T MAKE IT.

DOES THAT MEAN IT'S ACCOMPLISHED SOME GOAL?

NO, BUT IT'S AN ANIMAL, RIGHT?

...

IF IT'S ACCEPTED ITS DEATH...

NO...

WOBBLE
...

TILT

...CRO?

Hello

OH.

MY...

THAT...

Dear Minoru.

I met your father at work. He was the nicest person I've ever met. But I left my country and my language behind. I love him.

But my heart is the same.

and my language are not the same.

flutter

My country and my language are not the same.

And I love Minoru just as much.

But my heart is the same.

I will try hard so you can understand me.

...

SHE WRITES THEM EVERY NIGHT.

LETTERS TO YOU...

I THOUGHT YOU HATED ME...

BECAUSE I...I LIKE MY MOM UP IN HEAVEN BETTER...

...**

JAPANESE IS DIFFICULT.

YOU DON'T FORGET HER.

YOUR MAMA IN HEAVEN IS VERY DEAR ***.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO TALK TO YOU.

BECAUSE... I LOVE YOU, MINORU.

I CANNOT REPLACE HER.

BUT I *** WANT TO BE YOUR NEW FRIEND, YOUR NEW FAMILY.

I...

CRO...

I'M...

NOT ALONE?

...DON'T HAVE TO...

...BE ALONE?

CAW.


?

YOUR CROW ...

...JUST DIED.

...!

...fish

CRO...!

HMM? I SAW SOME-THING KINDA LIKE IT.

BUT IT DISAPPEARED REALLY FAST.

DON'T TELL ME... YOU SAW ITS PSYCHOLITH ?

BUT IF THEY DID HAVE PSYCHO-LITHS, I'D LIKE TO TRY READING ONE.

...

THERE YOU GO AGAIN.

ANIMALS DON'T HAVE SOULS.

IN THE LIGHT... I THOUGHT I SAW ANOTHER WOMAN SMILING.

YOU CAN'T.

YOU DON'T SPEAK THE RIGHT LANGUAGE.

It's not that animals don't have souls or memories.

OH.

MAYBE...

Maybe it's just that people can't read them because they're in a different language.

Maybe we shouldn't assume that just because someone, or something, doesn't speak our language that they don't have a mind or a soul...

twirl

THE RAIN STOPPED.

OH.

...SO IT DID.

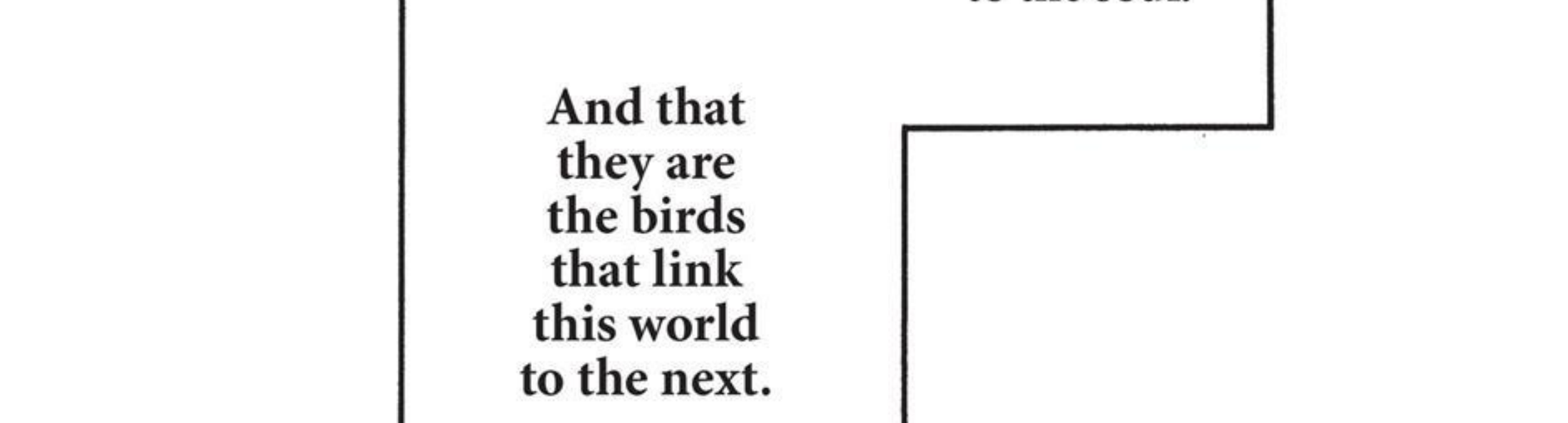
They are revered in Native American legends, Norse mythology, and all over the world as sun gods or the embodiments of souls.

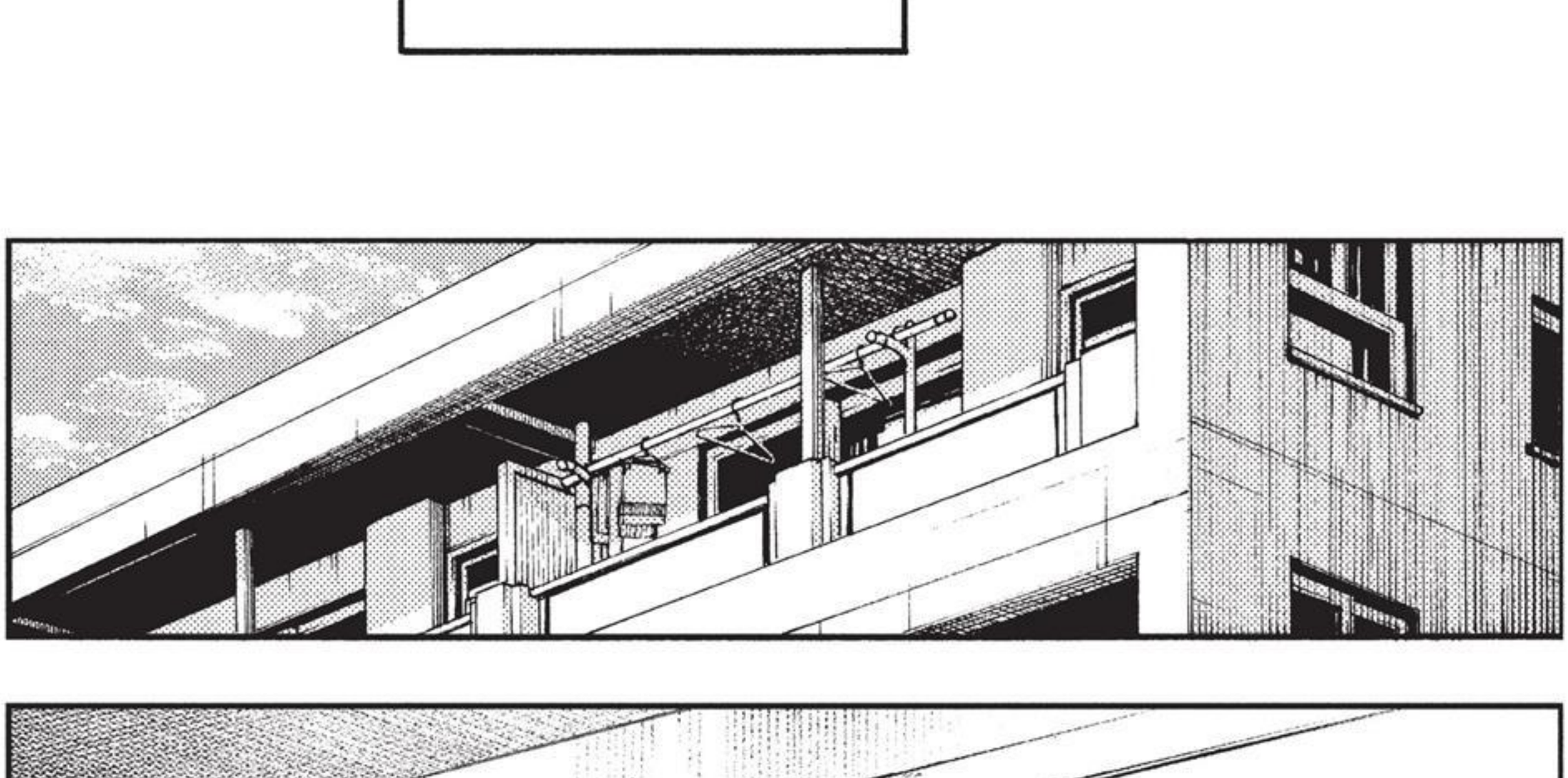
In ancient times, in Japan and China, they were called messengers of the gods, as represented by the *yatagarasu*.

Crows.

It is said
that when a
crow caws,
it is calling
to the soul.

And that
they are
the birds
that link
this world
to the next.





Chapter 10 Hospital-Acquired Infection (Part One)



SIGN: Konrin University Hospital

金輪医大病院

THE DOCTOR IS TOO BUSY TO SEE YOU.

YOU AGAIN ?

SIGN (LEFT): Insurance card
SIGN (RIGHT): Patient registration card

...

HE'S BEEN BUSY...FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR?

BUT...

...MY DAUGHTER !



GASP

GASP

THIS IS SO SLOW.

AND LAME.

AND I'M BORED.

FOOOSH

GASP

BECAUSE *YOU* HAD TO BUY SO MUCH OF YOUR SPRAY!

WELL WE DON'T HAVE MONEY FOR TRAIN FARE!

GASP

MY GAME BOY'S BROKEN. WHEN ARE YOU GONNA BUY ME A NEW ONE?

I TOLD YOU! YOU HAVE TO WAIT FOR PAYDAY!

THE ONE ON THE FAR LEFT.

HUH?

OH, THE LEFT?

HMM, AS FOR ME, I PREFER...

ON HER SHOULDER.

A STAIN-BEAST.

KA-POP

MAYBE I'LL FEEL BETTER IF I DO MY JOB. I'LL GO SPRAY HER.

WHAT?!

YOINK

CLANK

金輪医大病院

JUST A...

SIGN: **Konrin University Hospital**

AMANO-KUN, WAIT...

SCREEEX

REE-

!!!

SCREE-

REE-

CLACK!

SLAM

OOOHH

...?!

Ooh, nice! I wanna ride that!

I wonder if I could just have it?

TWITCH

!

WERE YOU IN CHARGE OF THIS HOSPITAL?

I'VE SEEN THAT FACE IN THE DATA.

...YOU'RE NOT HUMAN, ARE YOU?

CLACK!

?

I AM AZUSA EBINA.

THIS IS NAGISA EBINA.

AS OF TODAY, WE WILL BE TAKING OVER.

Azusa Ebina

HOSPITAL SPECIALIST

PSYCHOLITH COLLECTION & CLEANING

PHONE: 090-3[illegible]

KO fip

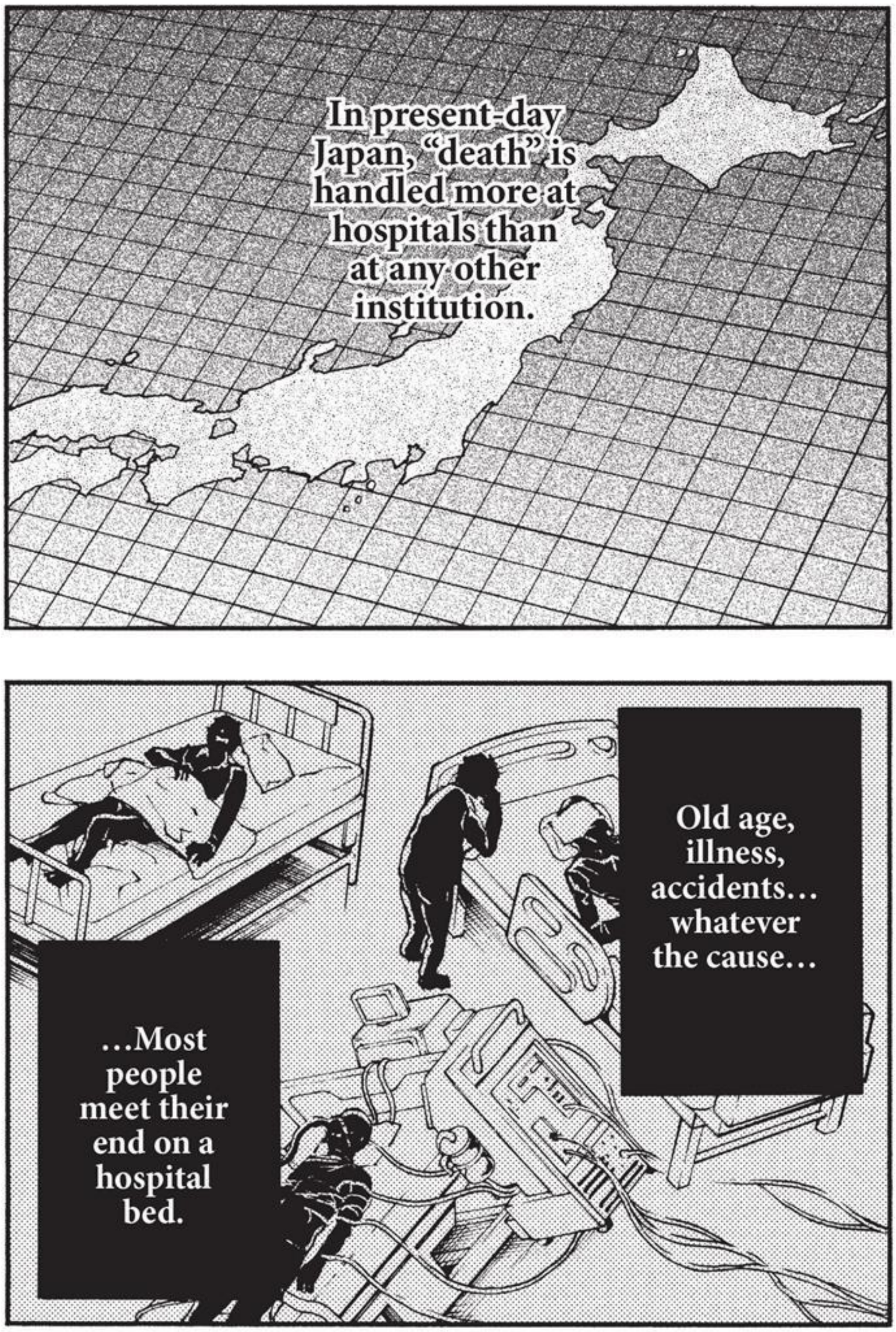
Azusa Ebina

HOSPITAL SPECIALIST

PSYCHOLITH COLLECTION & CLEANING

PHONE: 090-3597-7[illegible]

MORE PSYCHOLITH COLLECTORS ...?!


In present-day Japan, "death" is handled more at hospitals than at any other institution.
Old age, illness, accidents… whatever the cause…
…Most people meet their end on a hospital bed.
That comes out to approxi-mately three thousand every day.
Close to one million people die in medical institutions across the nation each year.

金輪医大病院

IN OTHER WORDS, THE "DEATH DENSITY" AT A HOSPITAL DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE TO ANYWHERE ELSE.

AND SO THEY REQUIRE SPECIALIZED PSYCHOLITH PROFESSIONALS.

SIGN: **Konrin University Hospital**

EH!!

KA-CRACK!!

AND YOU'RE A NEW TEAM THAT HASN'T EVEN BEEN TOGETHER FOR SIX MONTHS?!

THIS MUST BE A JOKE! YOU OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED!

CLACK!!

AND HERE YOU TWO ...

...ARE NOT EVEN IN YOUR OWN JURISDICTION?

HA.

EITHER HE DIDN'T, OR IT WAS PICKED UP SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL.

PROOF THAT YOU ARE NEGLECTING YOUR PATROL DUTIES.

UH ...

I APOLOGIZE FOR FORGETTING THE RULES...

BUT AMANO-KUN SAID HE SAW A STAINBEAST.

ALMOST ALL DEATHS IN A HOSPITAL ARE PART OF THE PLAN.

...IN OTHER WORDS, STAINS ONLY APPEAR WHEN A PATIENT IS BROUGHT IN AND DIES ON THE OPERATING TABLE OR IN THE ICU.

THEY ONLY BECOME STAINS WITH UNEXPECTED ACCIDENTS.

AND WE'VE ALREADY CONFIRMED OUR PREDECESSOR'S REPORTS OF NO STAINS IN THE ICU OR ANY OF THE OPERATING ROOMS...

THERE IT IS!

DASH

YOU AMATEUR! CAN'T YOU EVEN CONTROL YOUR OWN TOOL?!

AH, WAIT, AMANO-KUN!

AFTER ONLY SIX MONTHS ?

IRRITABLE ...?

HE'S KIND OF IRRITABLE RIGHT NOW. HE WANTS TO LET OFF SOME STEAM BY WORKING...

DAMN IT...

SCRUNCH

...

SHE WASN'T MEANT TO DIE...

OH.

LOOK, I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT THIS, EITHER...

SO WHERE DID THIS "AMANO" GO?!

CHILL

?!

HEY, AMANO-KUN!

WHAT HAPP—

...WHAT IS THIS?

THIS ATMO-SPHERE ...?!

THE AIR IS JUST SO STALE IN THE OLD WARD.

I'M JUST SO TIRED LATELY.

ME, TOO. MY SHOULDERS ARE SO HEAVY...

whoa.

...I BELIEVE THERE ARE ABOUT TEN THOU-SAND.

CAN'T EVEN SEE THEIR FACES.

THEY'RE COMPLETELY COATED IN STAIN-BEASTS.

...THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

LET'S GO!

THEY SAID THE OLD WARD ?

...THEY'VE BRED THROUGH-OUT THE ENTIRE BUILDING.

WOW.

NOD

TIME TO GET TO WORK.

NAGISA!

tug

sff

KA-POP

SNAP

SNAP

パキン

SHWAAAH

パキン

SNAP

SHWAAAH

パキン

SNAP

SPLAT

OOPS. MISSED.

WAAAH!

PSHH

INCREDI-BLE...

Whoa...

RATTLE RATTLE

YOUR CLEANING METHODS ARE SLOW AND VERY INEFFICIENT.

What are they doing?

...

HEY! HOW ARE WE GONNA PAY TO GET THIS CLEANED?!

THIS HOSPITAL IS UNDER *OUR* JURISDICTION. YOU TWO GO HOME!

WHIP!

SINCE THIS DOESN'T REALLY SEEM LIKE THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT JURISDICTION.

NO... WE'RE GOING TO HELP.

...OUR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO CLEAN THE ROOT OF IT.

THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM.

INDEED ...

GRAB

HOW MANY AMPOULES DO YOU HAVE LEFT?

THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO STEAMROLL THE WHOLE BUILDING...

RATTLE

BUT...THEY'VE BRED SO EXTENSIVELY, WE CAN'T IDENTIFY THE NEGATIVE POINT OF ORIGIN.

sff

YES, MA'AM.

...THEN MAKE SOME.

ZERO.

CLINK

WOW. THEY CAN DO THAT ...?

?

TREMBLE TREMBLE

ISS

PTS

A "BIT" ...?!

...

JUST A... HUH...?!

IT DOES TAKE A BIT OF A TOLL.

...VERY MUCH ALIKE.

LOOK ...

EBINA-SAN...YOU TWO...

AND WHAT IF SHE IS?

DON'T TELL ME SHE'S... YOUR SISTER?

IT'S ONLY ON THE OUT-SIDE.

NAGISA IS NO LONGER HUMAN.

SHE IS A TOOL.

Chapter 11 Hospital-Acquired Infection (Part Two)

RATTLE
RATTLE
Whoa.
THAT'S A LOT.

?

OH.

YOU'RE THAT GUY.

RATTLE...

RATTLE—

HEY, POPS.

SOMETHING'S BEEN BOTHERING ME.

There you are!

AMANO-KUN!

EBINA-SAN'S SISTER IS AT HER LIMIT.

STOP WANDERING AROUND AND START HELPING.

DID SOMEBODY DIE?

...

JUST A...

DON'T BE RUDE ...

...HEH.

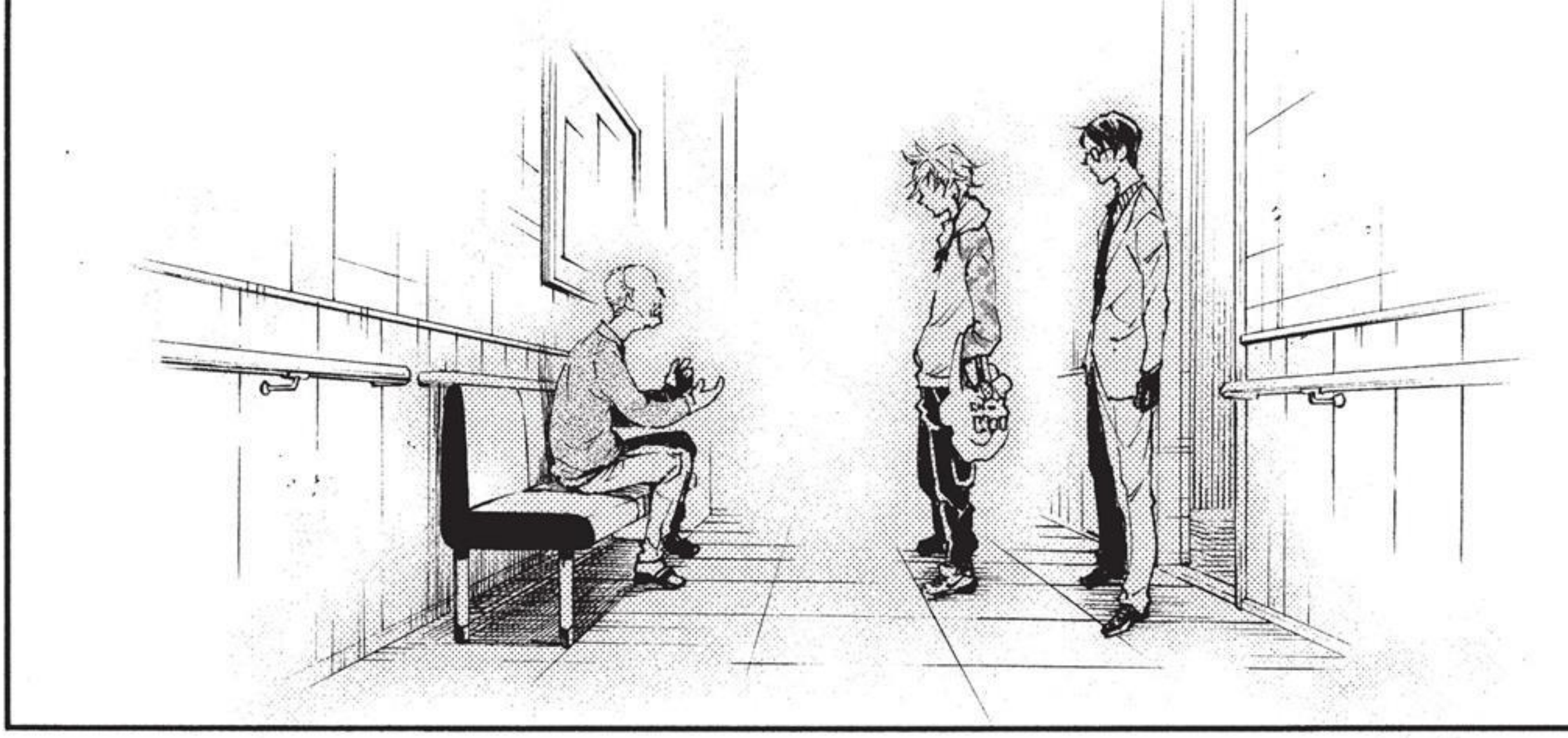
IT WAS ONE YEAR AGO...

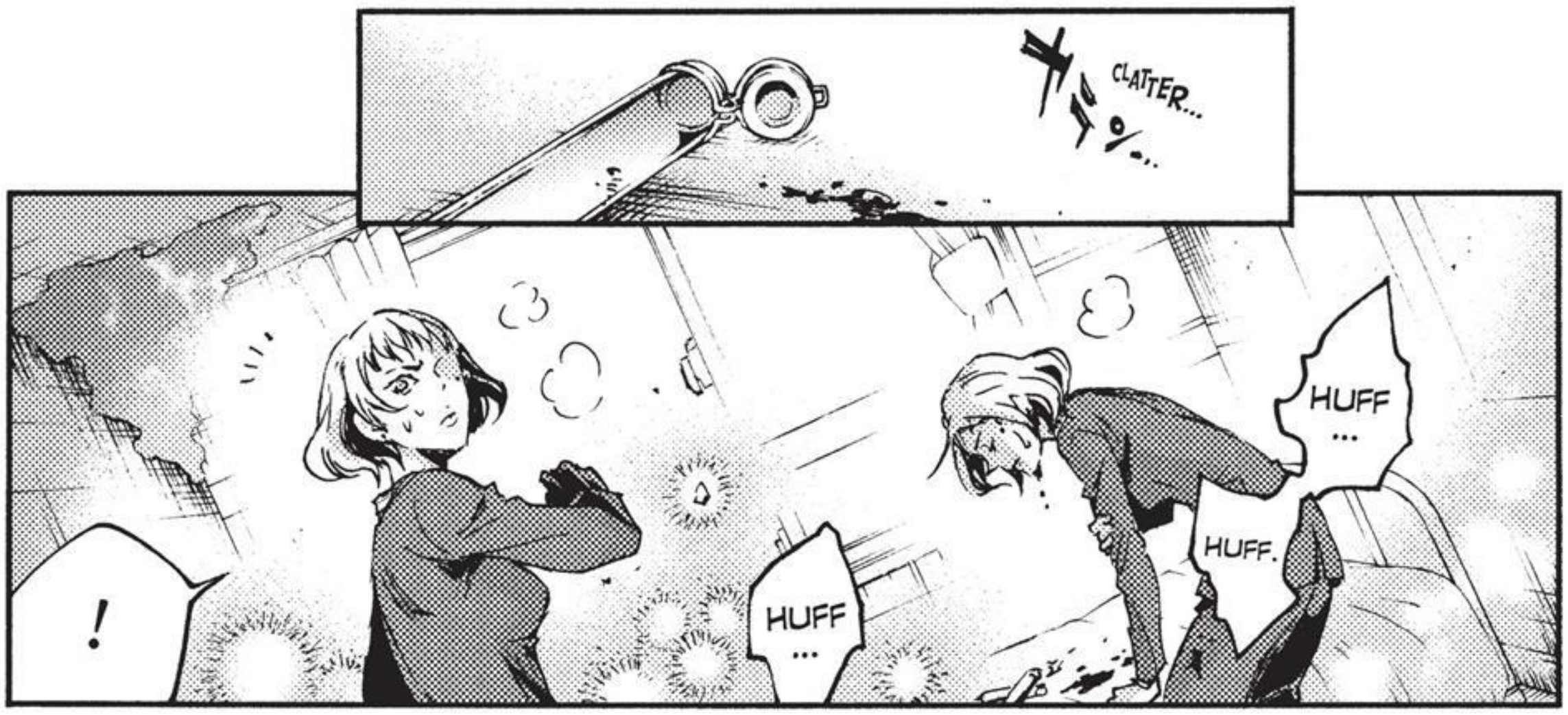
MY DAUGHTER.

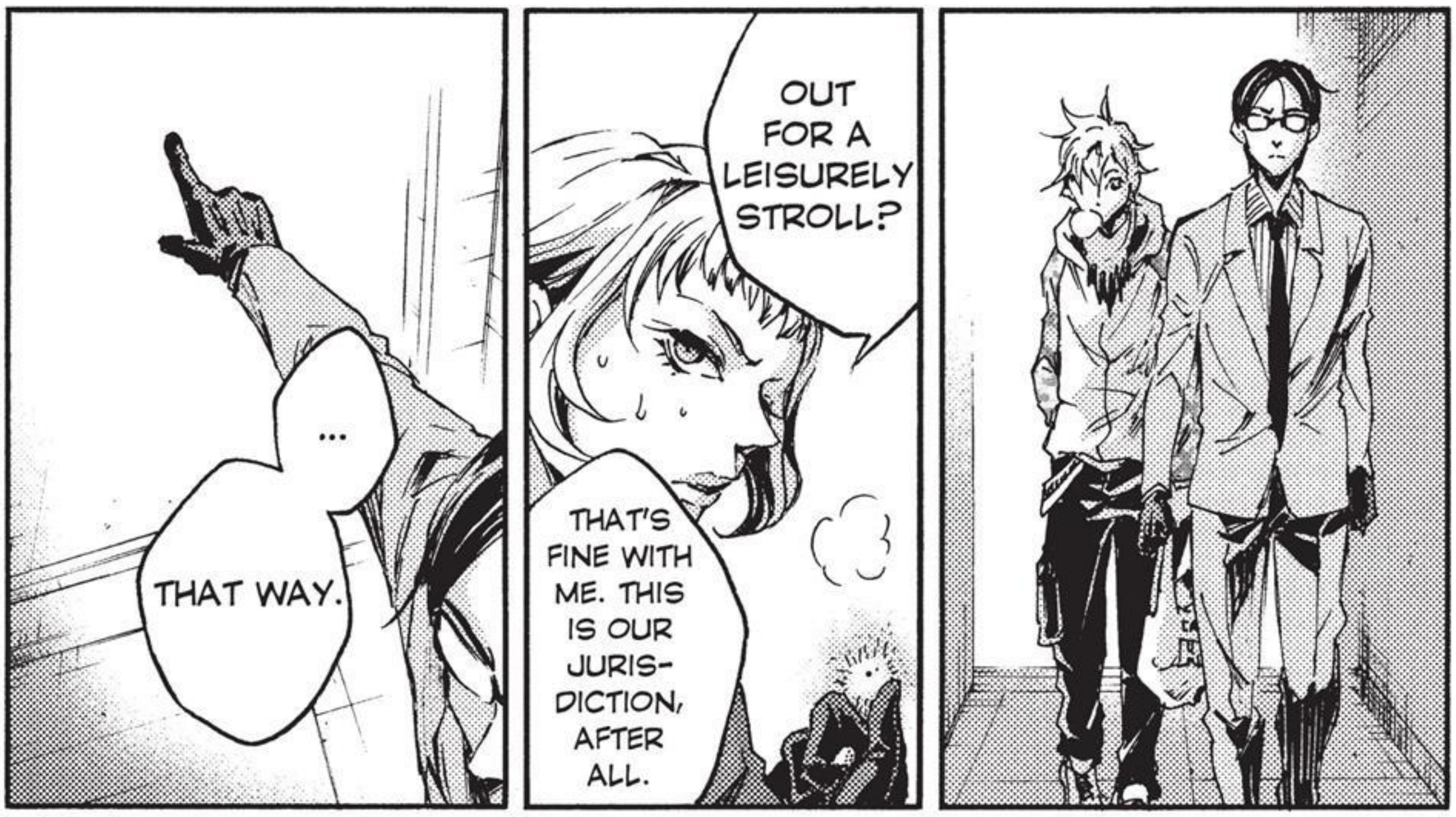
YOU'LL LISTEN TO ME?

IT WAS A SIMPLE OPERA-TION...

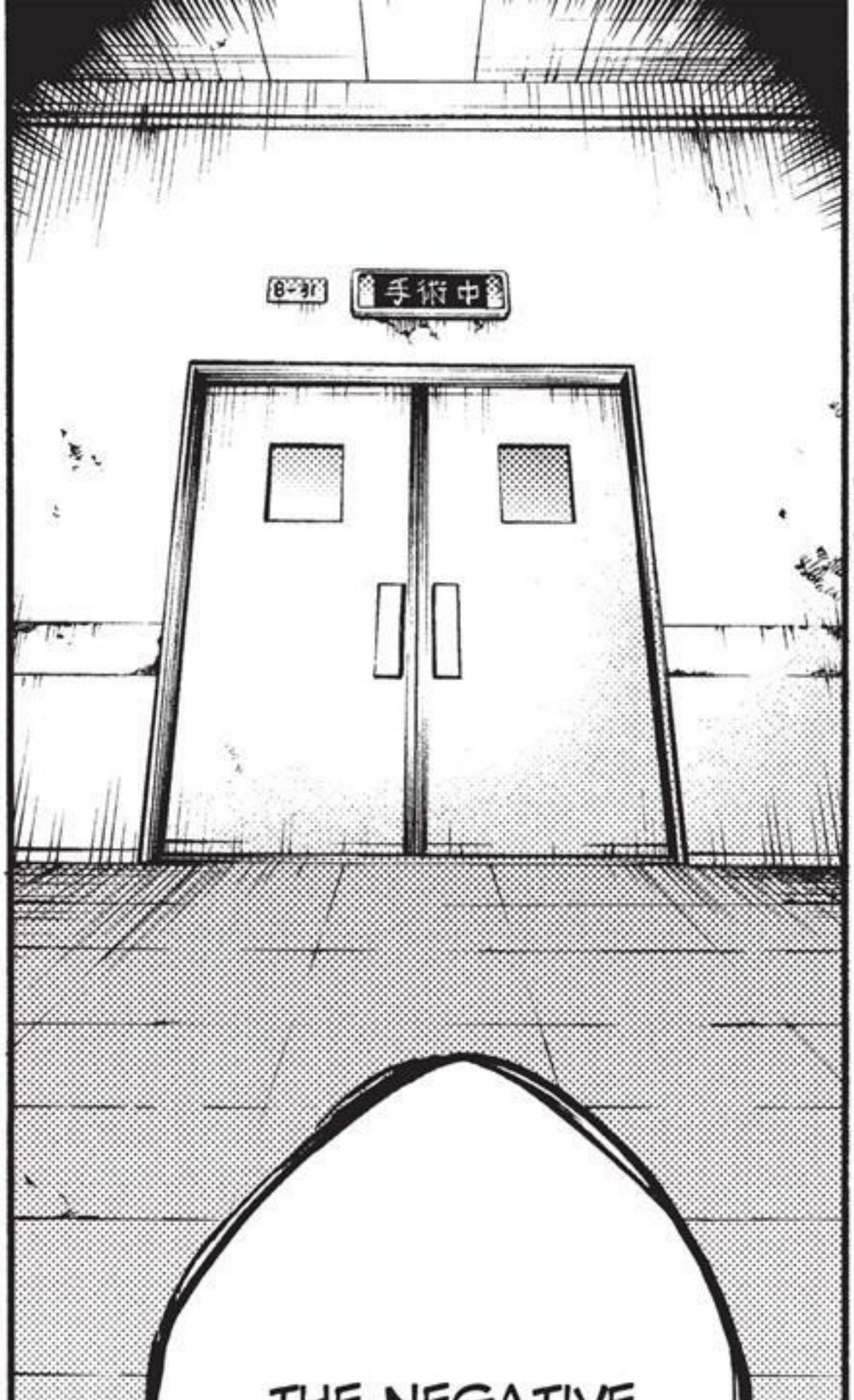
BUT SHE ...!!

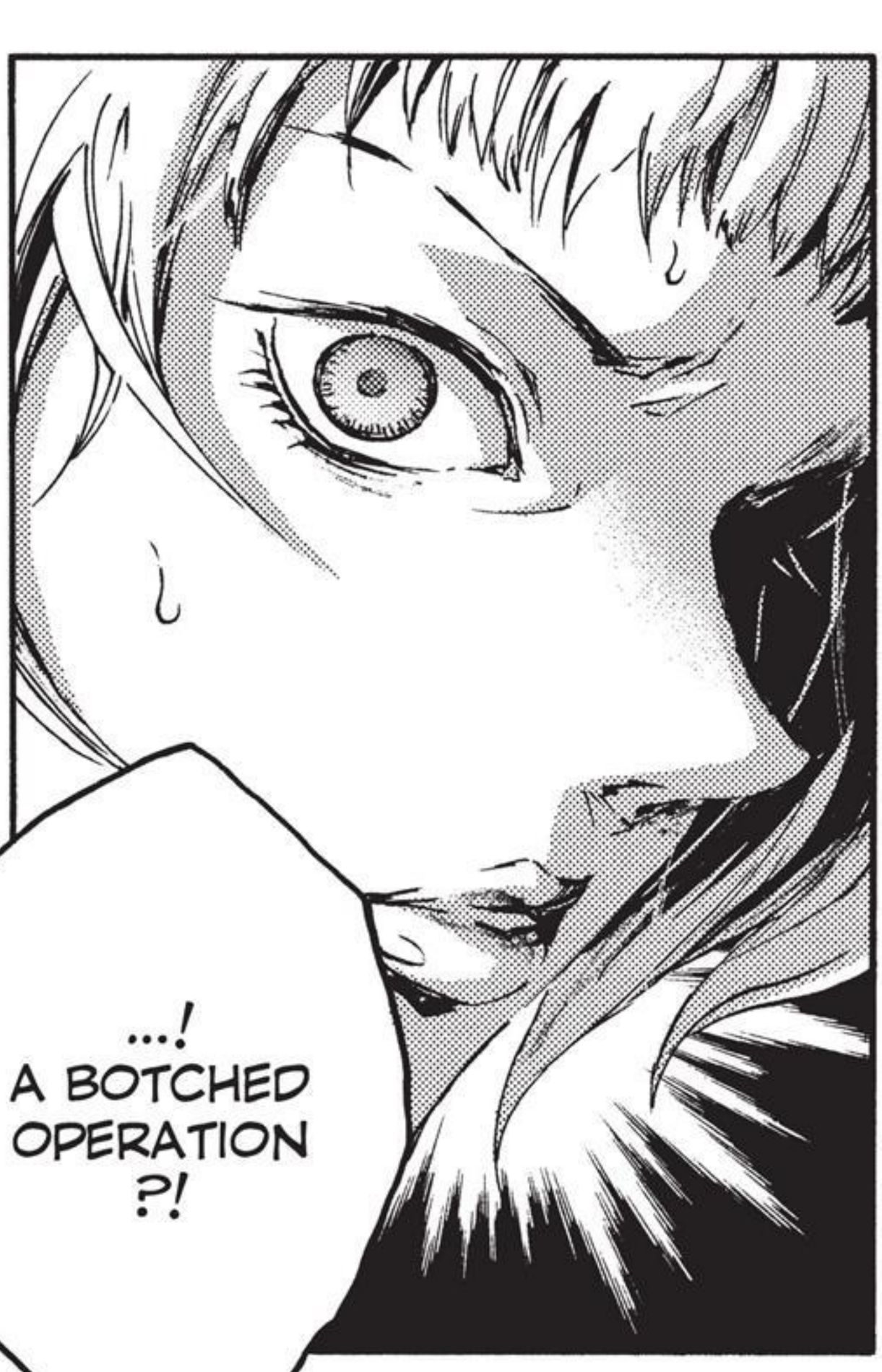


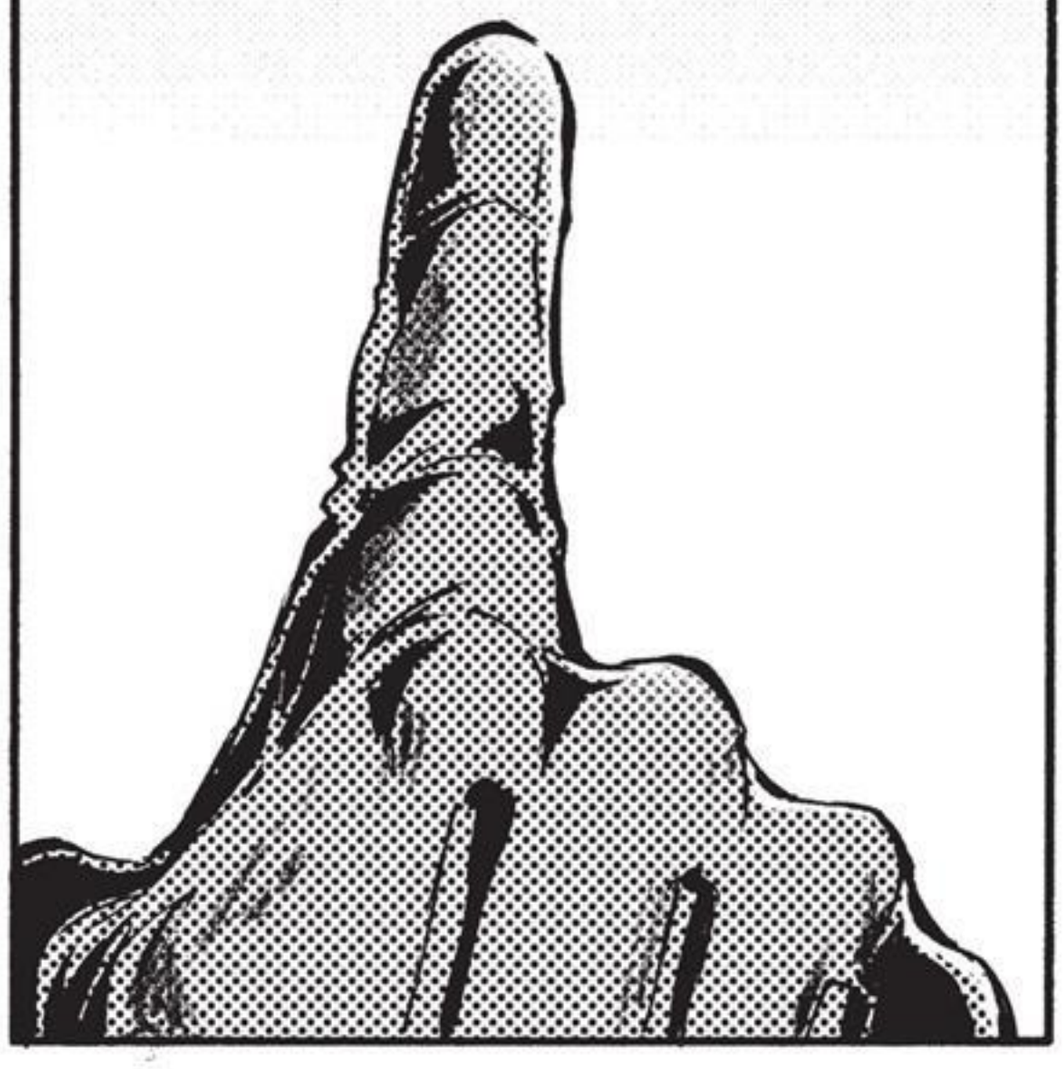

CLATTER...
!
HUFF...
HUFF.
HUFF...


THAT WAY.
...
OUT FOR A LEISURELY STROLL?
THAT'S FINE WITH ME. THIS IS OUR JURIS-DICTION, AFTER ALL.


AMANO-KUN WAS JUST TALKING TO AN OLD MAN.
HE SAYS THERE WAS A BOTCHED OPERATION, AND THE DOCTOR WON'T ADMIT IT.


手術中
THE NEGATIVE POINT CAUSING ALL OF THIS IS MOST LIKELY IN THAT OPERATING ROOM.


...! A BOTCHED OPERATION ?!



LET'S SUPPOSE, FOR EXAMPLE ...

...A LIFE-OR-DEATH OPERATION IS PERFORMED IN A ROOM THAT HAS BECOME A NEGATIVE POINT.

HOSPITALS ARE A GATHERING PLACE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE CLOSE TO DEATH...

THE SLIGHTEST DISRUPTION OF A PLAN CAN LEAD DIRECTLY TO ONE'S DEMISE.

OF COURSE ...

WHEN THOSE PLANS ARE DERAILED AND SOMEONE DIES, THAT CREATES ANOTHER STAIN...

...AND THROUGH THAT CHAIN REACTION, THE NEGATIVE POINTS MULTIPLY THROUGHOUT THE HOSPITAL!

A HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTION.

B-31

手術中

SIGN: **Operation in progress**

BAM

!!

BWOH

SHAKE

SHAKE

YES, MA'AM.

NAGI-SA!

DO IT!

SUUOOH

GROSS!

STAINBEAST STALAC-TITES!

DON'T DO THAT ...

!

CLAMP!

...!

NO, STOP!

I KNOW ...

I UNDER-STAND WHY YOU REFER TO THEM AS TOOLS.

I'M A CLEANER, TOO.

AND IF THAT'S TRUE...

...THEN MAYBE...

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT EVEN ANIMALS CAN HAVE SOULS.

BUT...

...TOOLS DO, TOO.

HUH?

And we bought lots of that spray.

...HEY, AMANO-KUN. YOU'VE GOT ENERGY TO SPARE, RIGHT?

WHAT...

...KIND OF RIDICULOUS NONSENSE ...?

BESIDES, I'M TIRED, AND THIS IS ANNOY-ING.

NO WAY, NOT POSSI-BLE.

CAN'T DO IT.

...

DING

...I'LL BUY YOU A NEW GAME BOY.

WHISPER

GRR ...

...I'LL JUST HAVE TO GET AN ADVANCE ON MY SALARY.

...

AND FIVE GAMES.

CASET

YOU GOT IT!

BLACK STAR

BLACK STAR

PUNCH

WSSHHH

DONE!

A HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTION, EH?

RATTLE

MAKES ME WANT TO STRANGLE THE LAZY OAF WHO PRECEDED US.

IN OTHER WORDS, AFTER THE FIRST BOTCHED OPERATION, THE NEGATIVE POINT DISRUPTED THE PLANS OF FIVE MORE PEOPLE. ...AN UTTER DISASTER.

ALL TOLD, THERE WERE SIX NEGATIVE POINTS.

THE BOTCHED OPERATION WAS KEPT UNDER WRAPS.

HOW COULD THEY HAVE KNOWN?

AND SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY DO IT...

CLATTER...

10—16B

HAD IT BEEN LEFT UNATTENDED, PATIENTS WHO OTHERWISE COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED WOULD HAVE STARTED DROPPING LIKE FLIES.

BUT NOW WE KNOW HOW SCARY HOSPITAL-ACQUIRED INFECTIONS CAN BE.

I SUP-POSE.

THE HOSPITAL'S REPUTATION WOULD BE DESTROYED, AND IT WOULD BE CLOSED DOWN...

...RESULTING IN THE CREATION OF AN ENORMOUS NEGATIVE POINT.

THE ABANDONED HOSPITAL WOULD BECOME A FAMOUS HAUNTED SPOT...

...AND STUPID KIDS WOULD COME HERE ON DARES, COVER THEMSELVES IN STAINBEASTS, AND RUIN THEIR OWN PLANS. ...AND ON AND ON THE PATTERN GOES.

BUT...

THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL AT HOSPITALS.

THEY REQUIRE PROFESSIONALS.

WHOA... IT'S THAT BAD, HUH?

SHUDDER...

CLACK!

YOU. HOW DID YOU THINK TO ASK THE BEREAVED FATHER?

SO I THOUGHT MAYBE SOME-THING HAD HAPPENED.

HE WAS JUST KINDA MAD.

HM?

I DUNNO.

?

WHY?

KNOCK

WELL, IT'S ODD, ISN'T IT?

HUH?

WHEN SOMEONE DIES, PEOPLE GET SAD ...

...BUT NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE GET MAD.

RIGHT ?

...

WHAT-EVER.

OH!

YOU ALMOST SOUND LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES!

?

CLAP CLAP

WHO ?

SHOOM

UH... IT'S NOT A COMPETI-TION...

You scared me.

EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT THOUGH IT MAY BE, I ADMIT DEFEAT. THIS TIME.

YOU TWO MAKE A GOOD TEAM.

SIGH...

THANK YOU...

AND NOW FOR NEWS ON THE BOTCHED OPERATION SCANDAL AT KONRIN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL.

KONRIN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL MALPRACTICE CASE

Organization-wide cover-up?

THE PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY THE HOSPITAL DIRECTOR HAS INCURRED FURTHER CRITICISM...

ACCORDING TO THE BEREFT FAMILY, WHO IS NOW SUING FOR MALPRACTICE, THEY DETERMINED THAT THE HOSPITAL WAS HIDING THEIR GUILT FROM THE OUTSET WHEN THE CAUSE OF DEATH DID NOT MATCH THE HOSPITAL'S EXPLANATION ...

...YEAH. THE KID ON THAT TEAM...

AMANO, WAS IT ?

...I AM TERRIBLY SORRY FOR MY MISERABLE PERFORMANCE ON THIS CASE.

HE COULD NOT HAVE MADE THAT DEDUCTION OR FINISHED THE JOB IF HE HAD NO EMOTIONS.

SO...

...DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU.

I WILL NOT LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU.

YOU ARE A TOOL, NAGISA.

...

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE BY MY SIDE.

SIGN: Numaike Shop

I WILL NOT DO ANY-THING ...

...THAT WOULD ACCELERATE YOUR DISPOSAL.

Priiincess Princess Princess.

YES, MA'AM.



"The Pros and Cons of Attachment"

School is an enjoyable prison.

"Creatures of Language"

I've seen crows eating other crows. I like carrion crows.

"Time Capsule"

It was fun drawing the little courtesan girl.

Afterword:

Thanks to all of you, we were finally able to release a second volume. Megaton thanks to Maekawa-san, Kondo-kun, my editor, my staff, and all you readers.

—Jinsei Kataoka

"The Rewards of Cleaning Up Someone Else's Mess"

I wonder if bowling alleys are all non-smoking now.

"Hospital-Acquired Infection"

I don't like hospitals, but I guess there aren't many people who do.

Episode 0



PSHHH

CLATTER

OKAY.

HERE YOU GO.

THAT'S IT FOR TODAY'S CLEANING!

SIGN: Class A River Kandagawa

...THAT'S WHAT I TOLD HIM, RIGHT?

AND TOMORROW WE HAVE PLANS TO CLEAN THE NEGATIVE POINT AT THIS BRIDGE AT 12:00.

...SOME-
THING'S
NOT
RIGHT.

AMANO-
KUN IS
MISSING
AGAIN.

Sakurai

Works managing souls. Rookie.

...

HE SAID IF I HAD THIS, I COULD CON-TACT HIM, BUT...

VVVN VVVN...

WHERE'S SAKURAI ?

Amano

Sakurai's partner. A soulless human being. Excels at handling souls.

I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO LOOK FOR HIM AGAIN.

GUESS I SHOULD STAY HERE UNTIL HE GETS HERE.

There aren't any buttons on this thing.

How do I use it?

(iphone)→

SIGN: **Stone Shop**

AMANO ?

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. BUT YOU BOUGHT HIM A NEW PHONE, RIGHT?

THE ONE WITH THE TOUCH SCREEN.

Tokieda

Sakurai's immediate supervisor. Someone who (seemingly) has important information about souls.

NO...

YOU CAN'T WRITE IT OFF.

AH HA HA. I BOUGHT HIM ONE BECAUSE I CAN WRITE IT OFF AS A BUSINESS EXPENSE.

I WANT ONE, TOO, SAKURAI -SAN!

WHAT?! NO WAY, LUCKY! ♡

Kae

Tokieda's daughter. High school student.

WHAA AAAT ?!

10000

...WHAT ?

RATTLE

Yaaawn.

LO SKIP
LO SKIP

swish
LO.

PSH LO

The flat ones go really far.

I'M BORED ...

I WISH I KNEW HOW TO USE THIS THING...

OH!

ARIMA-SAN!

警視庁

警視

YO! SAKU-RAI!

CAR: **Police**

OH, THE BLOND KID.

YOU SURE HE'S NOT JUST OFF FINDING ANOTHER MURDER SCENE OR SOME-THING?

AMANO ?

Detective Arima

One of the detectives who works with Sakurai and Amano.

I'd feel like you were taking me in.

No thanks.

DO YOU KNOW ANY PLACES HE'D GO ?

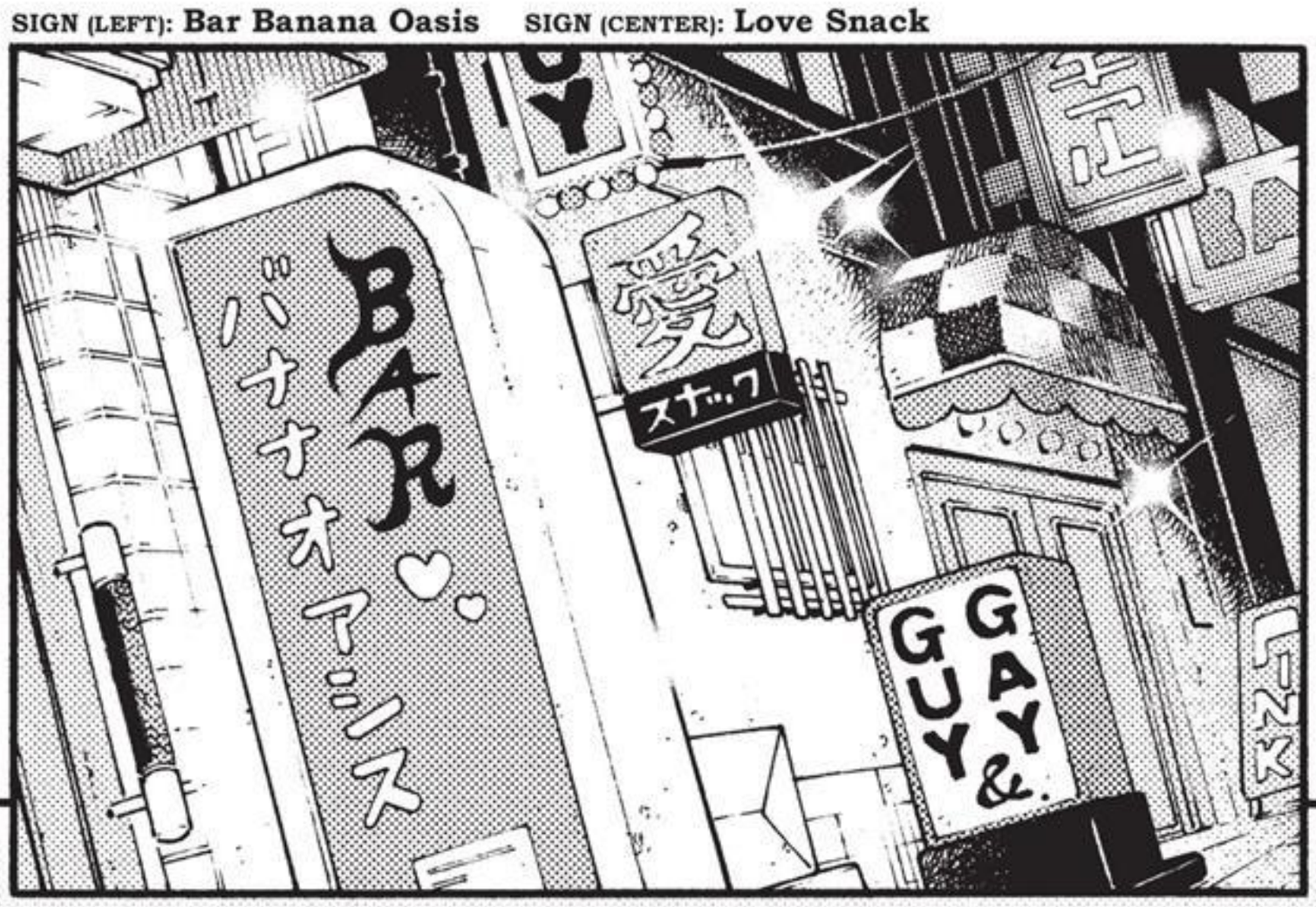
OR FRIENDS OF HIS ?

I'll give you a ride.

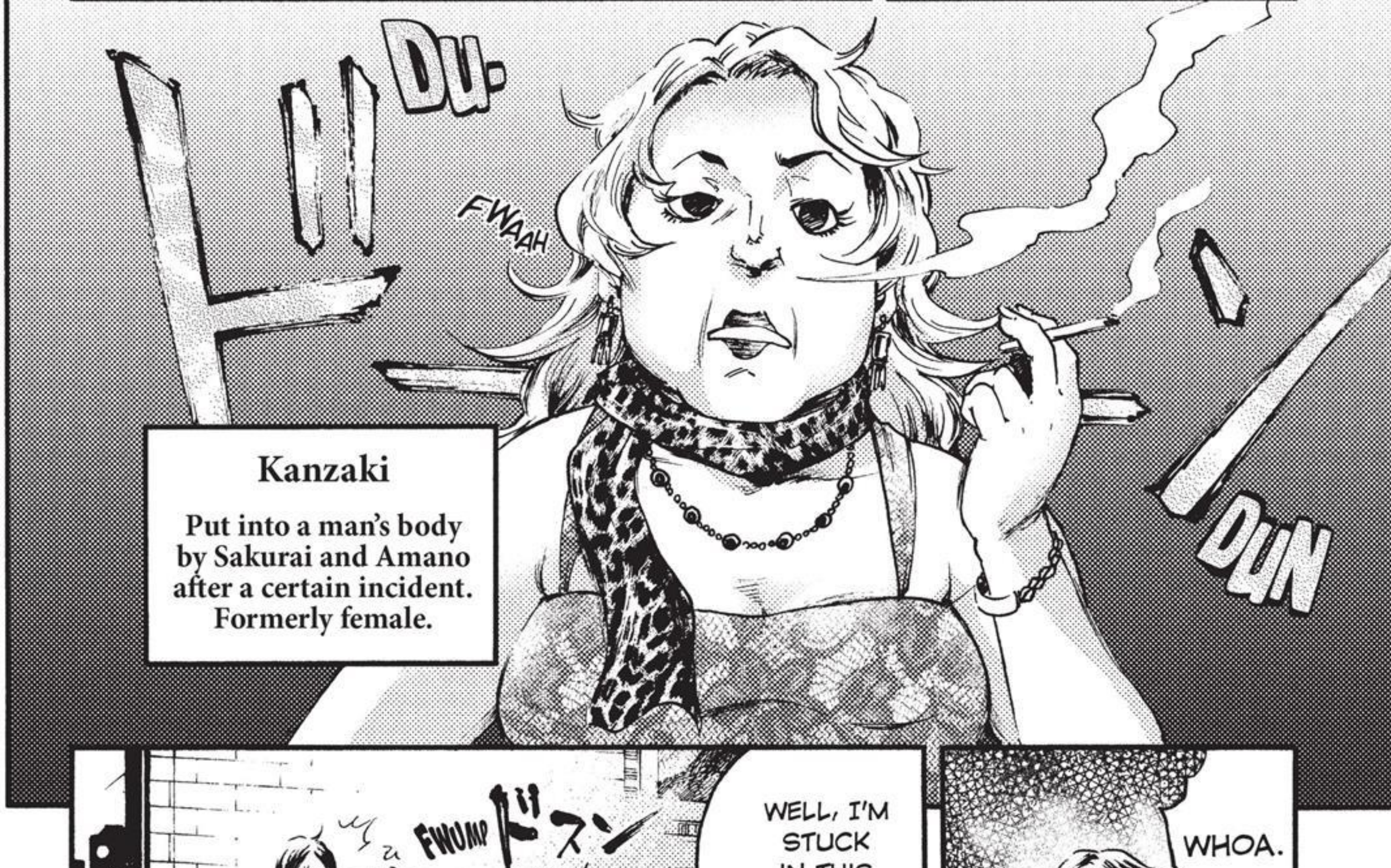
WELL, IF IT'S SOMETHING THE POLICE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT, GIVE ME A CALL.

AWW... I REALLY HOPE NOT.

SIGN (LEFT): Bar Banana Oasis SIGN (CENTER): Love Snack







Kanzaki

Put into a man's body by Sakurai and Amano after a certain incident. Formerly female.



OH, MY!

AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU OFF EASY, EITHER.

WHAT?

BUT I BET HE'D BE PRETTY POPULAR HERE, SO BRING HIM BY SOMETIME.

CRUMP

WHAT? THAT IRRITATING JOHNNY'S KID?

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM.

WAAA-AAAAA-AHHH!!

COME ON, YOU CAN STAY FOR A MINUTE OR TWO!

SQUEEEEEE

WANT A DRINK?

THAT SUIT IS *FABU-LOUS!*

SKIP SKIP

HUH?

...THERE'S SAKURAI!

HOBBLE

HOBBLE

LET'S SEE, CALL ...

...ER.

I CAN...

DING

...OH!

SKIP

SKIP

swish

WHAM

?!

I FIGURED OUT HOW TO CONTACT YOU WITH THAT!

?! A-AMANO-KUN?!

SAKURAI!

...WHAT?

?

WAAAAAH!

...THAT IS NOT *EVER* ACCEPTABLE !!

...IT'S YOUR FAULT, AMANO-KUN.

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT...

MUTTER

MUTTER

MUTTER

I can't take it anymore.

The repair fee...

TRUDGE...

TRUDGE...

SO... WHY DO YOU LOOK SO WORN OUT, SAKURAI?

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET DRAGGED STRAIGHT INTO A NEGATIVE POINT.

YOU OKAY? DON'T MAKE MORE WORK FOR ME.

Translation Notes

Collectors, page 85
Sakurai and Amano are psycholith collectors, as in there are psycholith pieces lying around and they collect them, like garbage collectors. The collectors Tokieda refers to here are hobbyists, people who collect psycholiths because they think they're neat.

Makgeolli, page 86
Makgeolli is an alcoholic beverage from Korea.

Until age seven, they are with the gods, page 97
As Tokieda explains, the theory behind this saying is that young children have a stronger connection to the spiritual world. This may be partly because children sometimes seem to see things that adults do not, and partly because, back when the saying came about, the young were more apt to dying. Thus, it was believed that a person's soul wasn't firmly attached to the physical world until the age of seven, and up to that point, they belonged more to the realm of spirits.

Cro, page 118
The name of this bird is a bit of a play on words. In Japanese, it's *kuro*, which means black, but since the U is swallowed, it also sounds like a really quick way to say the English word "crow".

Please save us, page 120
When this old man sees Amano surrounded by animals, he is reminded of Buddha, who is often depicted surrounded by animals. Here, he is reciting a Buddhist chant that literally means "I devote myself to Amitabha." Amitabha is the principal Buddha in the Pure Land Sect of Buddhism, and by repeating that he is devoting himself to him, he is essentially asking him to have mercy on him and save him from evil.

They say the fly has her spleen and the ant her gall, page 123
This is one of a few sayings meaning that even the smallest of insects have minds of their own. The Japanese saying translates more literally to "even an inchworm has half a soul," but the word for "worm" can also refer to any type of bug, including ladybugs. The phrase is often translated to a saying that originated from Shakespeare, "even a worm will turn." The translators felt the images of the fly and the ant would match the ladybug a little better.

***Yatagarasu*, page 157**
The *yatagarasu* is the Japanese name of the three-legged crows from Japanese and Chinese folklore. One such crow was sent by the sun goddess Amaterasu to guide Emperor Jimmu from the land of Kumano to the land of Yamato, which he then conquered and ruled.

Priiincess princess princess, page 210
This is the theme to an anime within an anime, *Love ☆ Hime* from *Yowamushi Pedal*. The hero of *Yowamushi Pedal* will sing this song to himself to encourage himself during difficult bicycling endeavors, such as pedaling up steep hills.

Ni-chome, page 222
Shinjuku Ni-chome is an area in Tokyo that is also known as Gay Town, and has the world's highest concentration of gay bars.

That irritating Johnny's kid, page 223
Johnny's is a collection of male pop star idols represented by Johnny & Associates. In other words, Kanzaki is suggesting that Amano looks like he stepped right out of a boy band.

FROM THE CREATOR OF *DEADMAN WONDERLAND*

LIVINGSTONE

STORY BY
TOMOHIRO MAEKAWA

ART BY
JINSEI KATAOKA



3

LIVINGSTONE

Story:
Tomohiro Maekawa

Manga:
Jinsei Kataoka



Chapter 12: An Extra Life 3

Chapter 13: Of Holy Ground and Legends 37

Chapter 14: A Broken Family 69

Chapter 15: The Dead's Time 101

Chapter 16: A Listening Ear 143

Chapter 17: What the Tool Has to Say 173



Chapter 12 An Extra Life

HERE GOES!

BEEP

S★PPOR
a
m
i

HUH?

WE'RE PRAC-TICALLY FAMILY.

AWW, WHY CAN'T I HUG YOU?

GRAB

EWW!

Your face is huge!

LET GO, THAT'S GROSS!

SHOVE

YOU BOYS CREATED ME, AFTER ALL.

THE TRANS-GENDER ICHIRO SAKUMA.

TA-

DAH

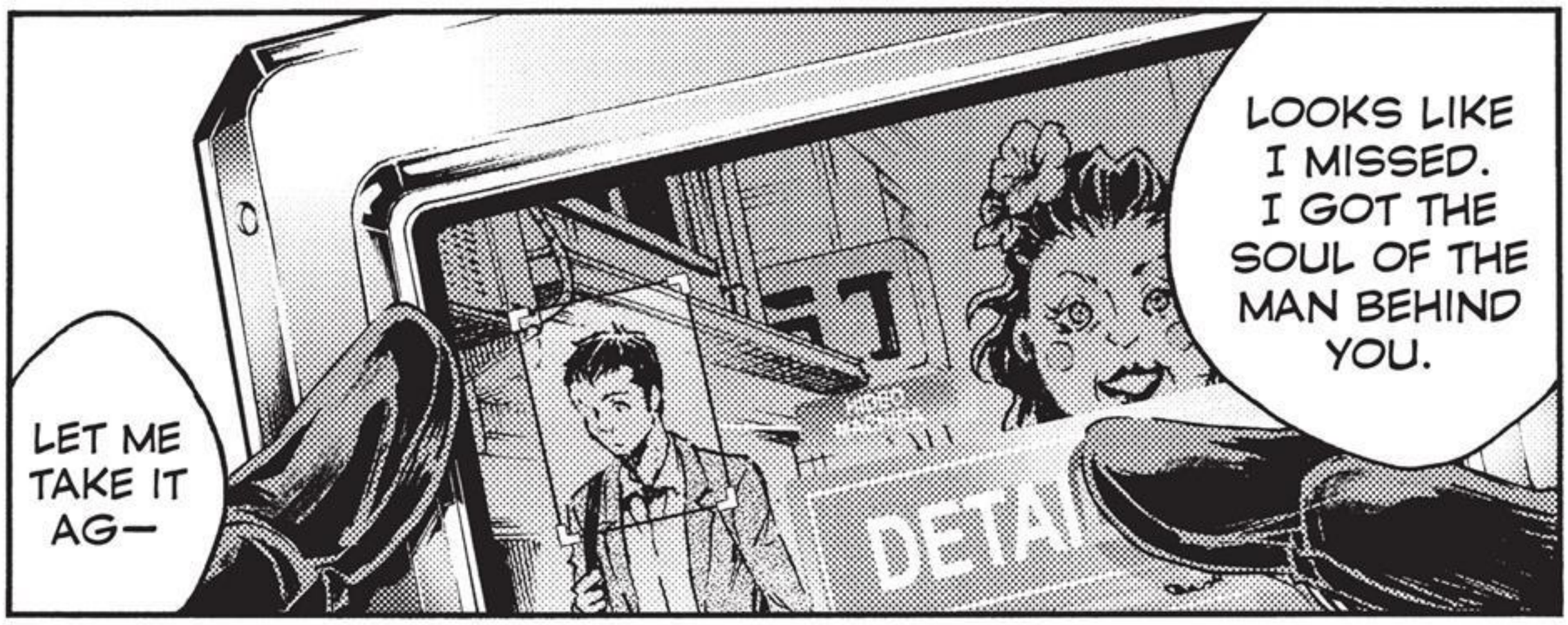
YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW I'VE BROKEN ALL TIES WITH MY REAL FAMILY.

UH, THIS ISN'T THAT KIND OF CAMERA.

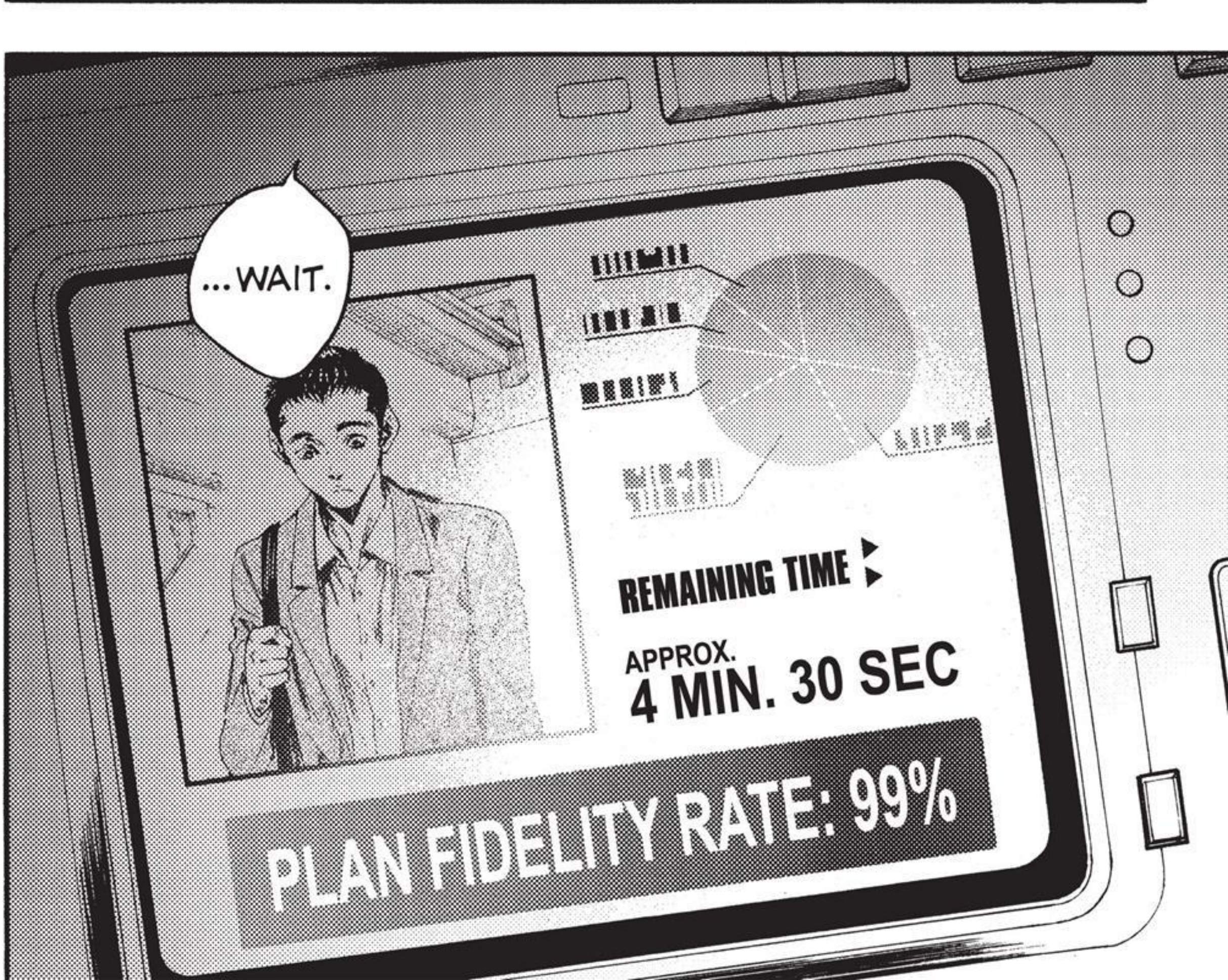
SO SEND ME THAT PHOTO LATER.

I'M JUST CHECKING YOUR PLAN FIDELITY RATE, BECAUSE WE NEED TO OBSERVE YOUR PROGRESS, KANZAKI-SAN... I MEAN, SAKUMA-SAN.

HUH?


LET ME TAKE IT AG—
LOOKS LIKE I MISSED. I GOT THE SOUL OF THE MAN BEHIND YOU.




...WAIT.
REMAINING TIME
APPROX.
4 MIN. 30 SEC
PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 99%

...! THAT MAN IS GOING TO DIE IN FOUR MINUTES!

EXCUSE M—

WHAT ARE YOU GOING AFTER HIM FOR?

THAT MAN'S FLESH IS GOING TO DIE IN FOUR MINUTES AND THIRTY SECONDS, RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.

AND HIS SOUL WILL MOVE ON TO THE NEXT LIFE.

ISN'T THAT HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE?

He's right.

THIS ISN'T A JOB FOR US.

BUT...

NOW THAT I'VE SEEN IT,

I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD AT LEAST STAND WITNESS.

I was being stupid.

And that's how...

BUMP

OH!

MONISTORE

VRRR

What about my picture?

Hello?

OH, COME ON.

I DON'T GET IT. YOU WANNA WATCH HIM DIE?

NOT REALLY, BUT...

HUH? WHERE DID HE...?

I'M SORRY FOR BUMPING INTO...

...I killed this young man.

OH, THAT'S OKAY.

IT'S TOTALLY FINE.

HUP.

RUSTLE

MONI STORE

SCREECH





WHAT HAPPENED? AN ACCI-DENT?!

AAAAH!

Whoa!

G35運送

murmur

murmur

POLICE!

murmur

murmur

HIC

nnngh?

NGH...

WHOA... THAT SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME!

THIS ACCI-DENT...

...HEY.

UH...NO, IT WAS JUST A COINCI-DENCE...

SO, UH, I GUESS THAT MEANS YOU SAVED ME!

IF I'D KEPT WALKING, THAT TRUCK WOULD'VE HIT ME!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

EITHER WAY, I OWE YOU MY LIFE!

...HEY, LOOK.

I'VE NEVER SEEN IT LOOK LIKE THAT BEFORE.

...?

REMAINING TIME

-6 MIN. 20 SEC

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 0%

PLAN FIDELITY RATE, ZERO PERCENT.

NEGATIVE TIME LEFT.

THIS MACHIDA GUY IS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

HOW OBLIVIOUS CAN YOU BE?

I'M SO SORRY, TOKIEDA-SAN.

MEDDLING WITH A SOUL'S PLAN...

...WILL THROW THE WHOLE WORLD OUT OF ORDER!

HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN?!!

HE ISN'T SUPPOSED TO EXIST ANYMORE!

NO... YOU'RE EXAGGER-ATING... RIGHT?

So that means there's currently one more person than the world's plan accounted for.

And even that *minor difference* can turn around and become a *major, glaring discrepancy.*

PLEASE WAIT FOR THE NEXT ONE.

WE'RE VERY SORRY. THIS BUS IS FULL.

イーッヒュー Pshh

!

VROOM

There is no seat for him in this world.

He's stealing *someone else's.*

And that *someone* might be a person who will have a big impact on the world's future.

SKREE

WHAM

I SLAM

HEY!

WHAT ARE YOU STOPPING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET FOR!

...

...

...

BUMP

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT HOW EVEN SOMETHING SMALL LIKE THE FLAPPING OF A BUTTERFLY'S WINGS CAN CREATE A SEQUENCE THAT REACHES ALL THE WAY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD?

SAKURAI.

RUSTLE

YOU CHANGED THE WORLD'S PLAN.

HUH?

Pshh...

HUFF

HUFF

HEY.

YOU'RE THAT GUY...

"The best way to minimize the damage..."

"...then don't let it become a stain (negative point)."

UM...

I, UH...

if you don't want to hurt his soul any more than you already have..."

"Since there's no hope of restoring the plan's fidelity rate,

But that means...

HEY, WE'RE SORRY ABOUT THIS.

BUT COULD YOU DIE FOR US, LIKE, RIGHT NOW?

YOUR BEING ALIVE RIGHT NOW...

...IS KIND OF LIKE A GLITCH.

SO, YEAH. COULD YOU DIE?

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DIE IN THAT ACCIDENT.

Ah ha ha!

BUT YOU *JUST* SAVED MY LIFE.

AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME TO DIE?

...Pfft!

But there's no way we can convince him to die now.

If we're going to save his soul, he needs to willingly give us his permission.

OH, MAN.

YOUR FRIEND'S KINDA WEIRD, DUDE.

This is my fault.

...HA HA.

UM...

OH.

THE SUIT-CASE?

ARE YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?

I WAS JUST WORKING OVERSEAS FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS. NOW I'M GOING HOME.

AND MAN, THE PRESENTS I BOUGHT MY NEPHEWS ARE GETTING HEAVY.

NO, I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE. I'M ON MY WAY BACK.

Heh heh.

SEE YA.

THAT'S OKAY.

I GOT USED TO THAT KIND OF THING OVERSEAS.

...IS THAT SO?

I'M SORRY FOR THE WEIRD-NESS.

BUT BEFORE THAT, YOU HAVE TO DI...

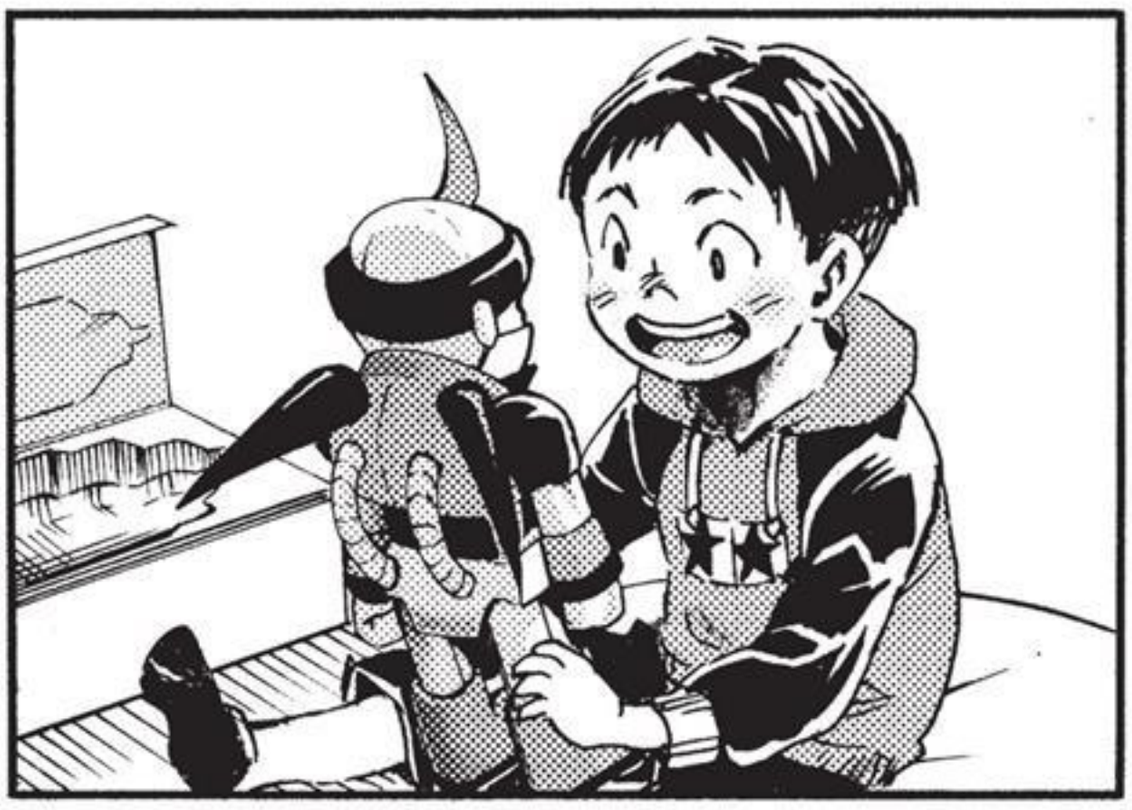
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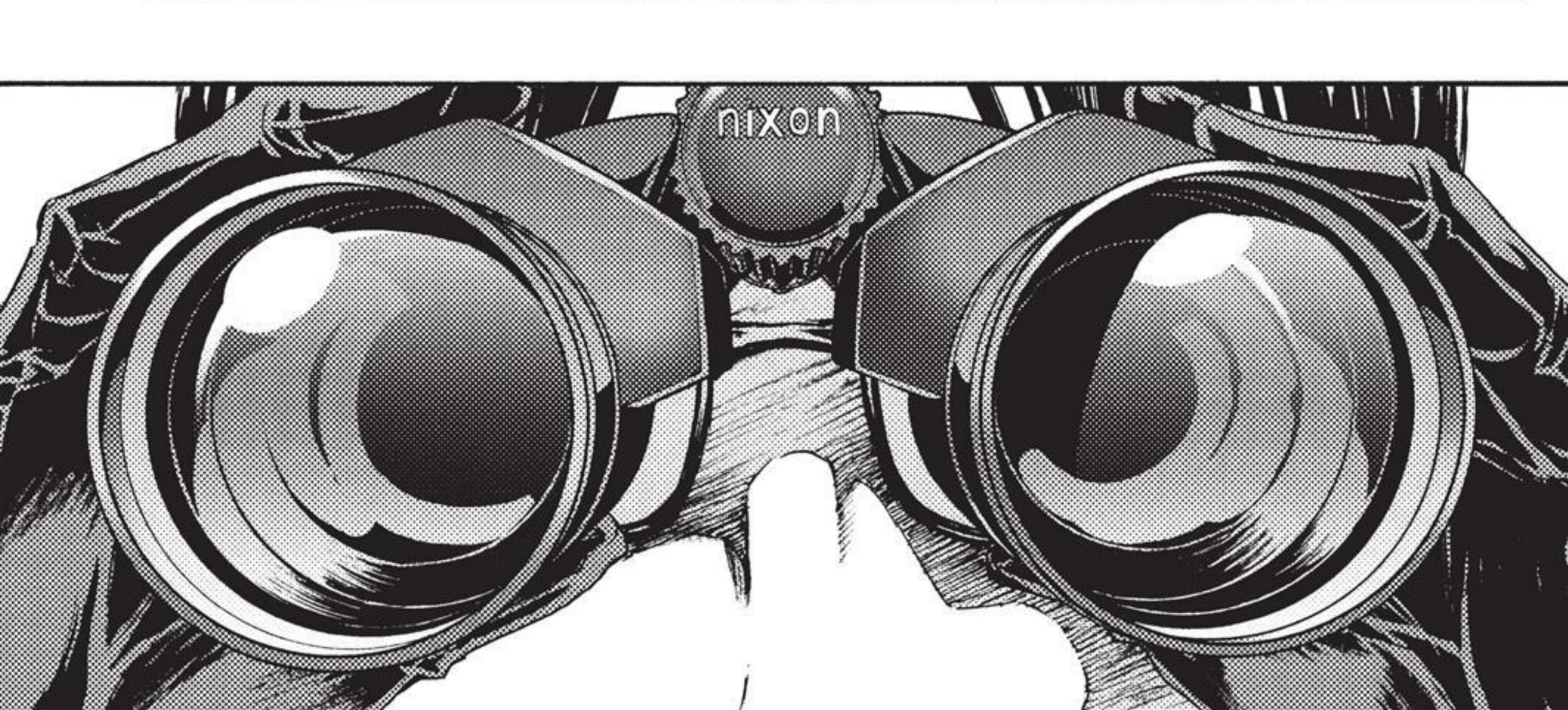
...TAKE CARE.

There's one other way to contain the situation.









WATCH HIM.

Now that his plan is off track, there's no telling how long it could be before he dies. It could be in five minutes...or twenty years.

If we don't want it to drag other people along with it, we need to keep a close eye on him.

His psycholith's plans were completely derailed. When he dies, it will shatter...and form a stain.

CAN'T HE JUST DIE ALREADY?

...STILL.

Siiigh

WHAT A PAIN IN THE BUTT.

SO HOW MANY YEARS ARE WE GONNA WATCH HIM?

ARE WE GONNA COME OUT HERE TO THE BOONIES EVERY DAY?

...

YES, IT DOES.

IF HE'D DIED IN THAT ACCIDENT, THEN THEY WOULD ALL BE...

HE HASN'T SEEN HIS FAMILY IN FIVE YEARS, AFTER ALL.

IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING LOADS OF FUN.

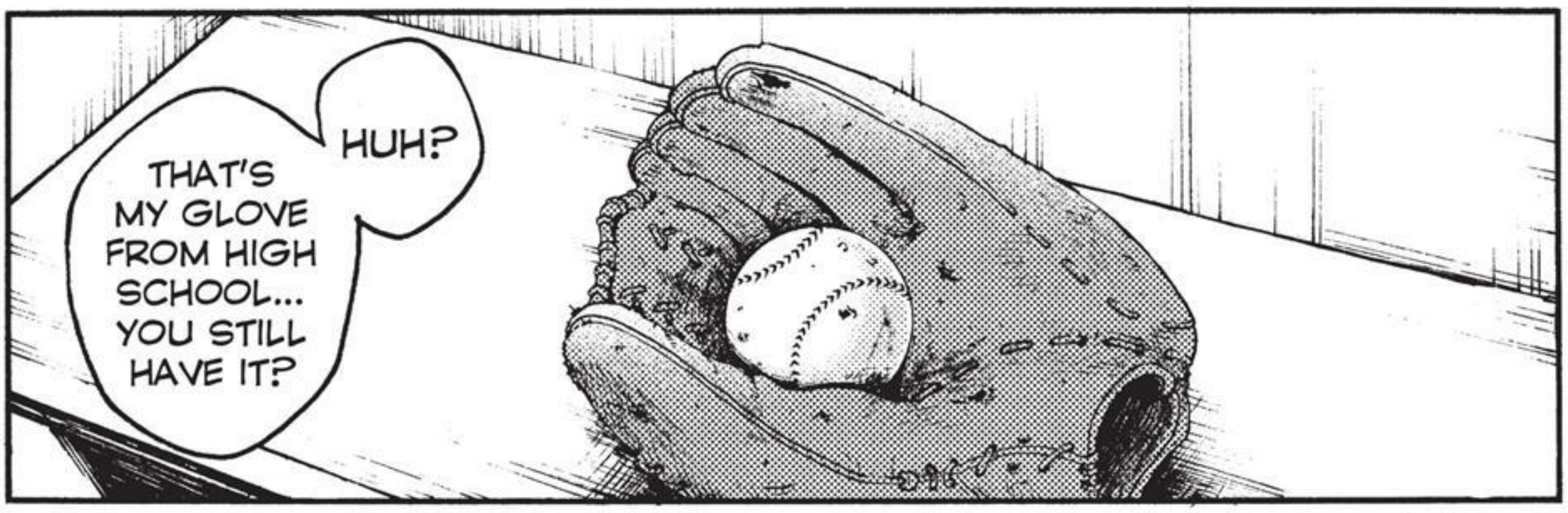
...DON'T START THINKING YOU DID THEM A FAVOR.

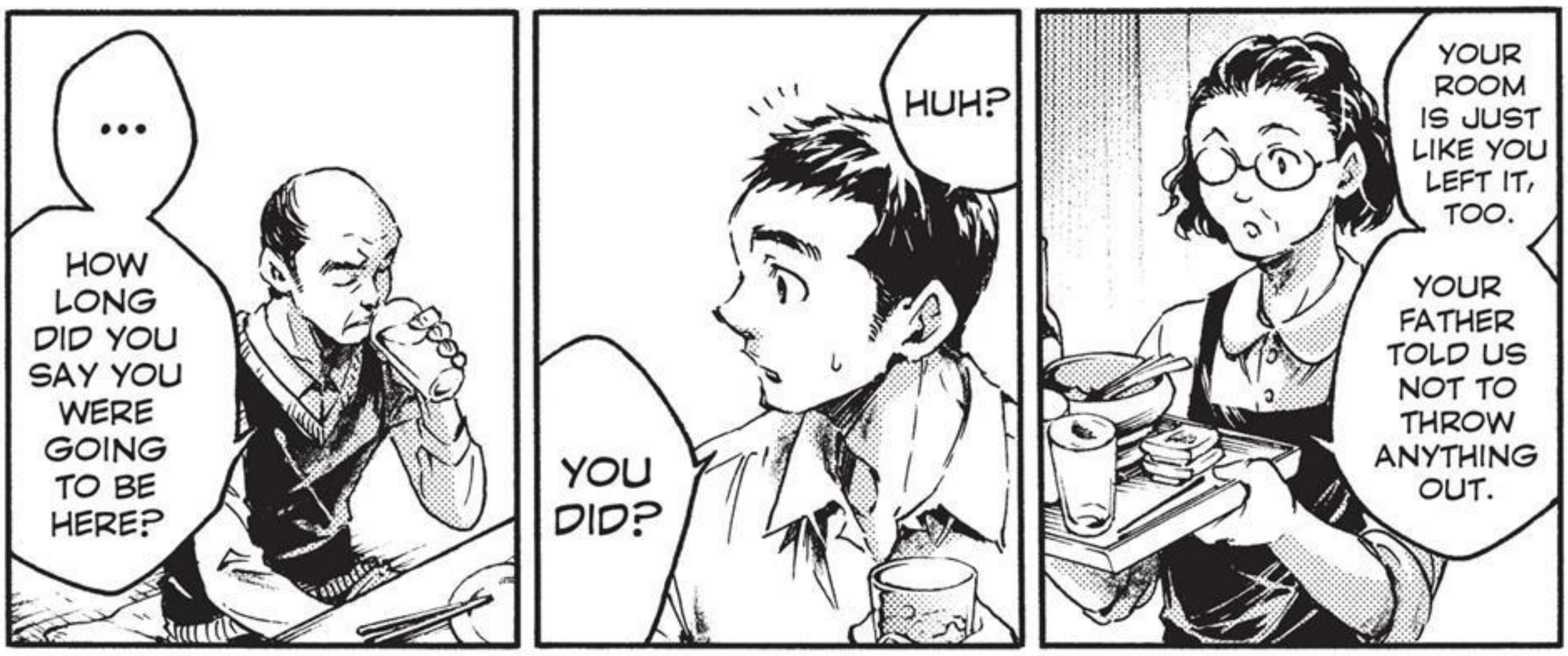
TOKIEDA-SAN IS RIGHT TO BE ANGRY.

...I'M SORRY.

THIS WONDERFUL TIME HE'S HAVING IS CRUSHING HIS SOUL.

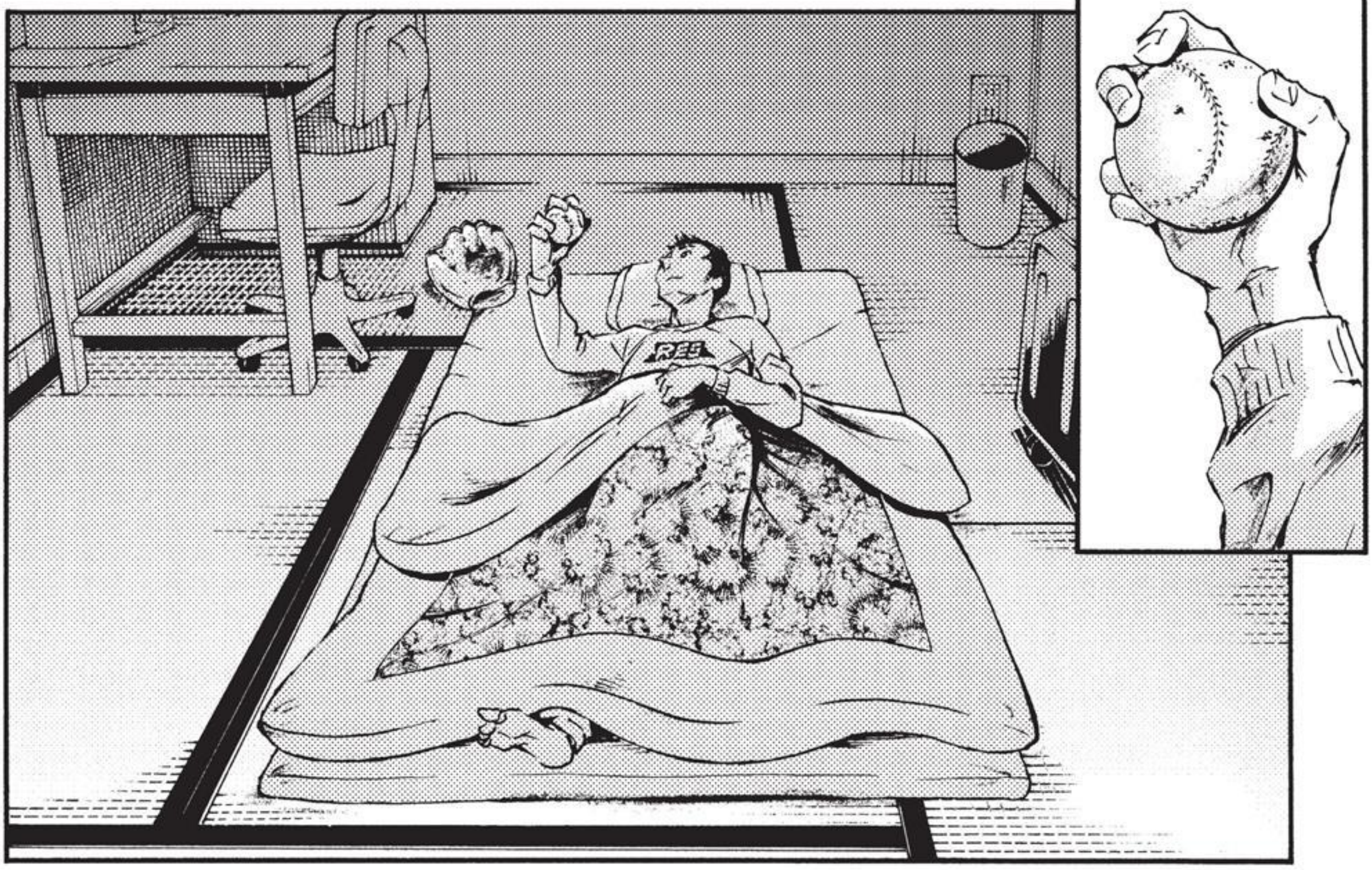


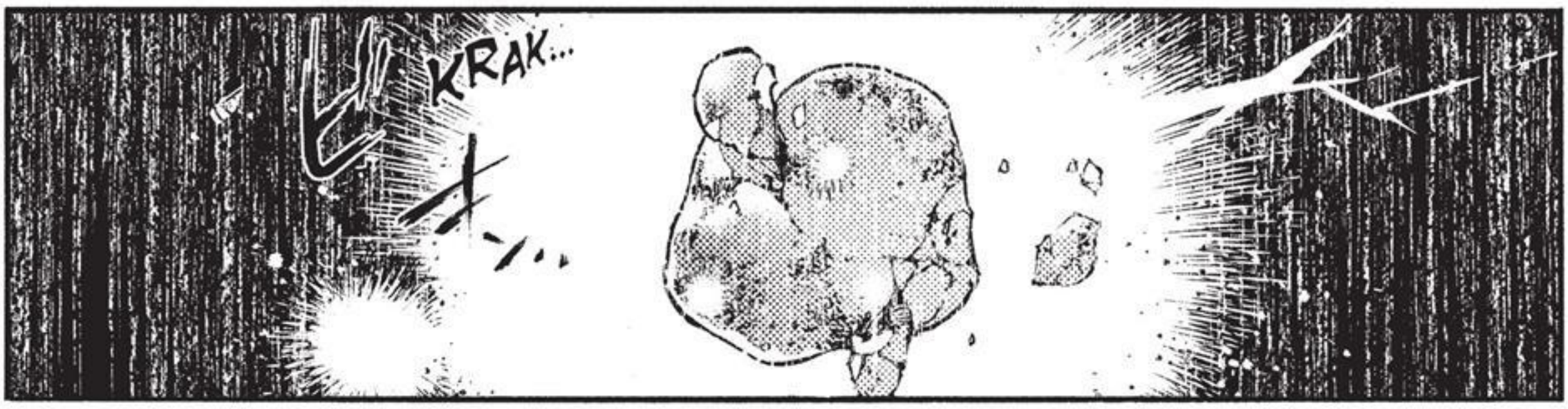

HUH?
THAT'S MY GLOVE FROM HIGH SCHOOL... YOU STILL HAVE IT?

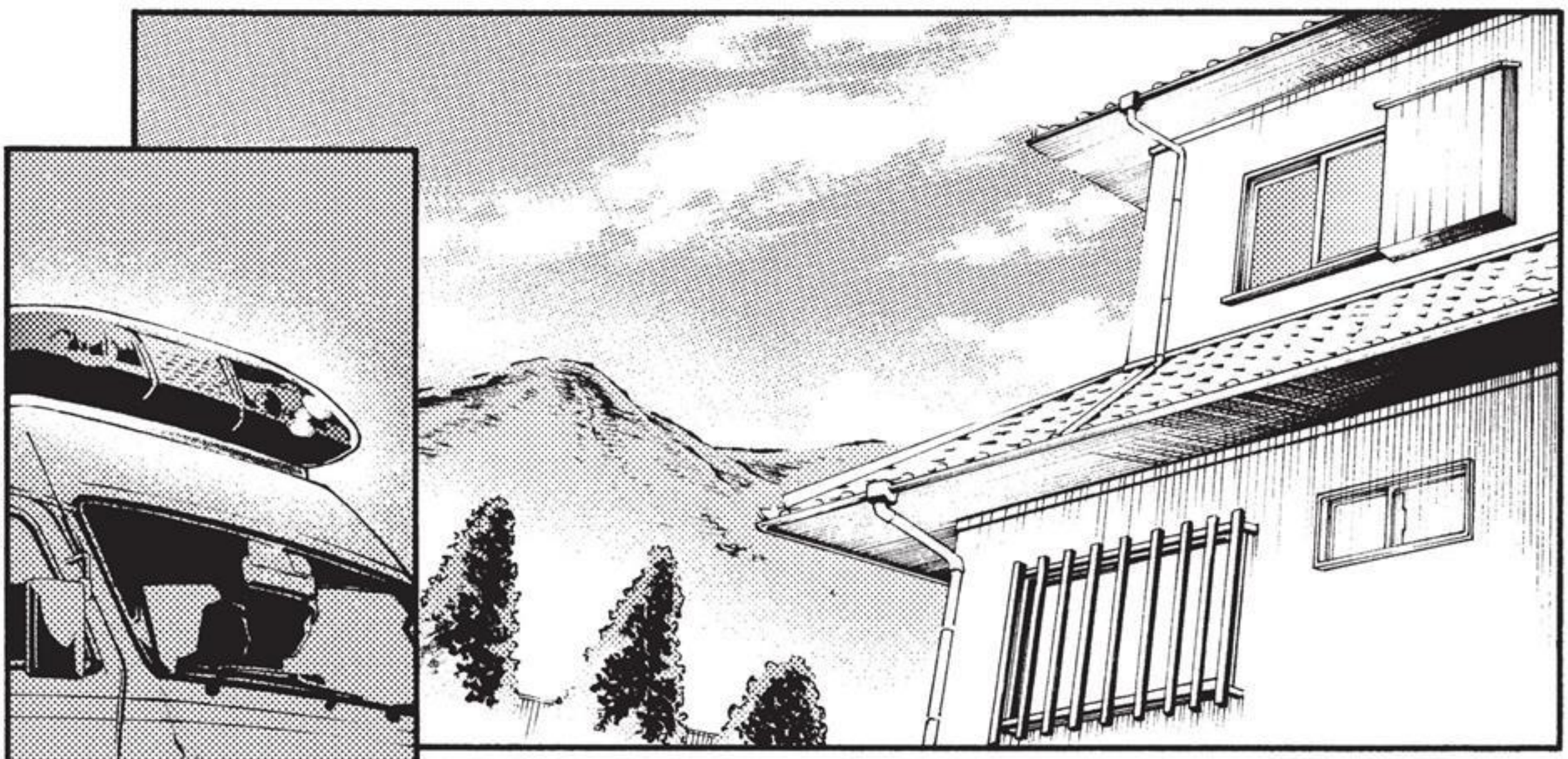

...
HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU WERE GOING TO BE HERE?
HUH?
YOU DID?
YOUR ROOM IS JUST LIKE YOU LEFT IT, TOO.
YOUR FATHER TOLD US NOT TO THROW ANYTHING OUT.


...IT'S GONNA BE A WHILE BEFORE I GET ANY PEACE IN THIS HOUSE.


ピクッ…


REI


KRAK...



HUH?

IS HE DEAD?

...

...THAT WAS FAST.

...IT'S BAD.

WHAT ABOUT THE STAIN? DO YOU SEE IT?

THEY'RE ALREADY BREEDING LIKE COCK-ROACHES.

I...

...KILLED THAT MAN'S SOUL.

THAT'S OKAY.

HE GOT TO SEE HIS FAMILY BEFORE HE DIED.

MAYBE YOU WERE HALF WRONG, BUT HALF RIGHT, TOO.

WE HAVE WORK TO DO.

COME ON, STOP BEING SO MELODRA-MATIC.

...BUT I GUESS HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE ISN'T OUR BUSINESS.

THAT... KIND OF GETS ME DOWN IN A DIFFERENT SORT OF WAY.

RATTLE

RATTLE

WHY?

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GETTING THIS FROM YOU, AMANO-KUN.

NO REASON.

flap

When I heard that he—that Hideo Machida—was smiling when he died…

…I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.



Chapter 13 Of Holy Land and Legends

RATTLE

PSHH

IF ANYONE SAW THE ACCIDENT THAT TOOK PLACE HERE AT 7PM ON THE 7th OF

SEVEN

WELL, I'M GOING TO READ THE PSYCHO-LITH.

WAIT OVER THERE.

CLATTER

GOOD WORK, AMANO-KUN.

WOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT TAG BEFORE.

IS IT YOURS? OR YOUR CREW'S?

SMACK

!

DO YOU HAVE A CREW?

I'M A GRAFFITI WRITER, TOO.

DANG

COME ON!

IT'S RAGE'S TAG STICKER...

?

...WHAT'S THIS?

I THINK YOU COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO!

Oh.

WE'RE BOMBING UNDER THAT BRIDGE. YOU SHOULD COME CHECK IT OUT.

SO YOU'RE NEW!

YOU DON'T RECOG-NIZE IT? NO WAY!

...

CATCH YOU LATER!

WHRR

TMP

UH, OKAY?

?

I READ THE PSYCHOLITH, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GETTING AT.

イングストン

I THINK I'M A PRO, IT'S AT CLEANING, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW... IF

...IT WAS AN OLD MAN.

CAR: Y.K. Livingstone

AND HE LOST HIS BALANCE AND HIT HIS HEAD.

TECHNICALLY IT'S A HIT AND RUN, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE DRIVER DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE.

A CAR JUST BARELY GRAZED HIS ELBOW.

YOU CAN EVEN DIE FROM A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT... MAKES YOU REALIZE JUST HOW FRAGILE LIFE IS.

CLATTER

HUH? WELL, YES, I SUPPOSE I AM.

flap flap

WOULD YOU SAY YOU'RE PART OF MY CREW?

SO HEY.

YES. THEY SAY A PERSON'S LIFE IS A MOVIE, AND MY JOB IS TO WATCH EVERY ENDI—

HEY, I WAS JUST SAYING SOME-THING DEEP.

EXCUSE ME! AMANO-KUN?!

PSHHH

...DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THE GUY THAT DID IT.

?

WHAT DO *YOU* WANT?

!

THANKS FOR STOP-PING BY!

BUT I ASKED HIM TO COME HERE. I FOUND HIM TAGGING.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL...

WHAM

OH, THAT ALL?

KŌJI! FUMITO!

I TOLD YOU TO STOP ACCUSING PEOPLE AS SOON AS YOU MEET THEM!

BUT NOZOMI...

SO WHAT'S YOUR TAG NAME?

IF YOU'RE A FAN OF RAGE'S, YOU SHOULD'VE SAID SO!

BAM

BAM

NO, I'M NOT...

DANGER

AWESOME, RIGHT?

IT'S RAGE'S BEST PIECE. WE'RE FINISHING IT FOR HIM.

SOME-THING ...

...FEELS FAMILIAR ABOUT THIS.

I DO MY TAGS FOR WORK.

IT'S ALWAYS FELT RIGHT, BUT LATELY I'VE BEEN WONDERING WHY.

...WHY DO I FEEL THAT WAY?

IT WAS HIS CALLING.

Ha.

ANY TOY CAN WRITE FOR FUN.

BUT RAGE'S ART IS DIFFER-ENT.

"FUN"?

You do it for work? Like, legals?

?

YOU MEAN YOU THINK IT'S FUN?

WHO'S RAGE?

HE'S A LEGEND!

YOU DON'T KNOW RAGE?!

?

...

WHAT ?!

Of course people from all around the world gave him mad props. They'd always say he was a king.

Rage is a hero!

He was even featured on a famous New York graffiti site!

an Tokyo GRAFFITI "RAGE"

B-boys and skaters all over the world loved Rage.

And obviously, as his crew, we really wanted him to get up.

But last month, just before he got there...





IT'S OUR HOLY GROUND.

...YOU CAN TELL, CAN'T YOU?

THESE AREN'T JUST SOME RANDOM SCRIB-BLES.

HE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ALL-NIGHT ART SESSION.

YEAH.

AND... HE DIED RIGHT HERE?

gyoo

gyoo gyoo

...UH.

RIGHT THERE...

THAT PART IS RAGE'S ORIGINAL.

WE'RE DOING THE REST BASED ON HIS BLACK BOOK, BUT HE REALLY WAS ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL.

YOU CAN TELL?

YOU DO HAVE A GOOD EYE.

LEGENDS, HOLY GROUND...

HE WAS THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

NO, I HAVE NO IDEA WHO PAINTED WHAT.

...

...ABOUT THIS "RAGE" GUY'S MYSTERIOUS DEATH.

IF SO, THEN I'LL FIND OUT THE TRUTH FOR YOU...

ARE YOU DETECTIVES OR SOMETHING?

NOT EVEN THE POLICE COULD FIND ANYTHING.

FORGET IT.

THIS GUY... IN MY CREW? HE CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF THE DEAD.

WELL, ANYWAY, IT'S PART OF OUR JOB.

...WHAT?

I MEAN, I'M DYING TO KNOW, BUT...

COME BY AGAIN, IF YOU WANT.

...BUT THANKS FOR THE OFFER.

I CAN TELL YOU LIKE GRAFFITI.

DO I...?

"LIKE"...?

AMANO?

YES... HE RAN OFF YESTERDAY AND I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.

...IT'S TOO EARLY IN THE MORNING FOR HIM TO BE WORKING ON HIS OWN.

I HOPE YOU FIND HIM.

Video game stores, family restau-rants...

I'M GOING TO CHECK ALL THE PLACES HE MIGHT BE.

...FOR CRYING OUT LOUD.

IS THAT KID GONNA BE OKAY?

CLUNK

WHAT...?

CLATTER

RESTAURANT Donny's RESTAURANT

I finally find you, and...

WHAT?

READ THE MEMORIES IN THIS PSYCHO-LITH.

WHY ARE YOU GOING OFF AND WORKING WITHOUT ME?!

YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THAT.

TELL WHO?

HIS CREW.

APPAR-ENTLY HE'S A LEGEND.

SLURP

THEY'RE UPSET BECAUSE THEY DON'T KNOW HOW HE DIED, SO I FIGURED I'D TELL THEM.

fip...

OKAY, FINE. ...

CLATTER

...!

?!

UH, UM...DID AMANO-KUN DO SOME-THING?

WHY ?!

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?!

GRAB

ｸｲｯ!

...DAMN IT!

YOU GOT A LOT A GUTS SHOWING YOUR FACE HERE!

THIS AIN'T JUST "SOMETHING"! LOOK!

TAG!

HNGH ?!

I CAN'T FIND OUT UNLESS I CLEAN THE NEGATIVE POINT BY TAGGING IT.

WELL, YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT RAGE'S DEATH, RIGHT?

STOMP

WAIT A MINUTE, KŌJI!

...THE HELL, DUDE!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR WEIRD CRAP.

HUH?

NO, BUT...

GO ON, SAKURAI. TELL THEM WHAT HAPPENED.

DO YOU...

...REALLY KNOW HOW RAGE DIED?

ARE YOU THE DETECTIVE HE TOLD US ABOUT?

DETEC-TIVE?

YES.

WELL...

Then he took a break, and right when he was about to get on his skateboard...

That night, he was painting a picture.

HE SLIPPED.

KINDA LIKE THIS.

OH.

THERE. THAT'S THE SKATE-BOARD.

AND JUST LIKE THAT...

HE MUST HAVE HIT HIS HEAD IN A BAD SPOT.

YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE CRAP UP LIKE THAT.

THAT'S NOT POSSI-BLE.

HE WAS RAGE...

...YOU'RE LYING.

?

WHAT? IT'S GOOD NEWS, RIGHT?

HE JUST FELL ON HIS SKATE-BOARD, THAT'S ALL.

IT WASN'T MURDER OR SUICIDE, JUST A REGULAR OLD ACCI-DENT.

STOP IT!!

...?

WHY ARE YOU TELLING US THIS?

IS IT *FUN* FOR YOU?

...DON'T SAY ANOTHER WORD!

SLAP

I WAS STUPID TO THINK FOR EVEN A SECOND THAT YOU COULD JOIN OUR CREW!

YOU'RE THE WORST!

ALL RIGHT.

MAYBE WE WERE WRONG.

WHAT ?!

BUT THEY SAID THEY WANTED TO KNOW!

...I SEE.

SO THAT'S HOW THIS ALL CAME ABOUT.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY WANTED TO CHERISH HIS MEMORY AS A LEGEND.

NOT AS "FACT" OR "TRUTH."

SOME-TIMES IT'S BETTER TO LEAVE THINGS A MYSTERY.

THEY TOOK THEIR MEMORIES OF RAGE-SAN AND HIS MYSTERY, AND MADE IT PART OF THEIR STORY.

...DAMN IT.

THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

HMMM... MAYBE...IT'S *BECAUSE* HE WAS THEIR CREW.

...THEIR LEGEND IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THEIR CREW?

YOU KNOW IT DOESN'T HURT.

AS IF YOU DON'T KNOW.

...

DOES YOUR FACE HURT?

...?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, AMANO-KUN?

I'M NOT HUMAN.

...YOU WERE HUMAN.

BUT...

Maybe Amano-kun used to be part of a group of young people like them…

His body kept its habit of tagging.

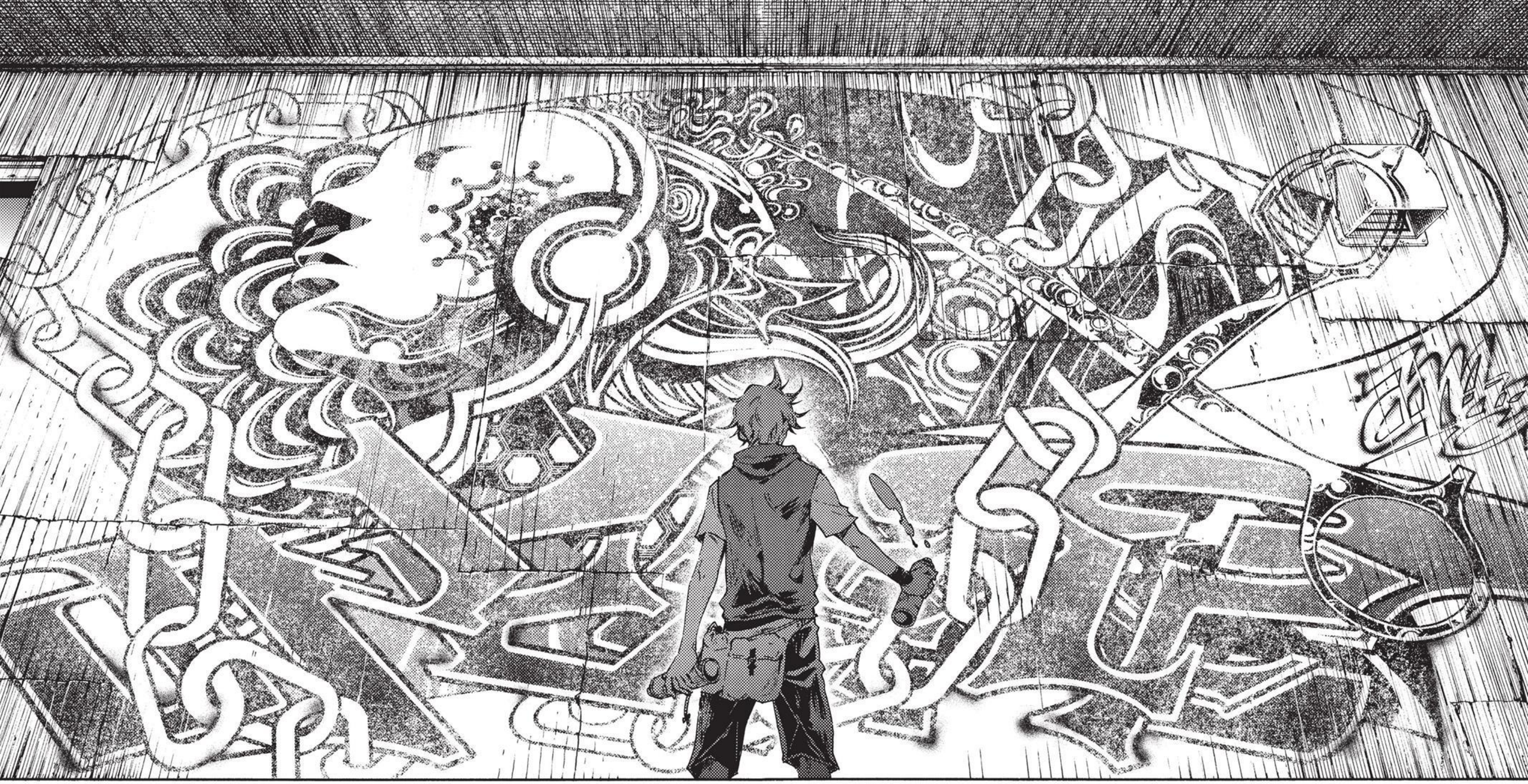
WHAM

…and family.

With friends…

PSHH

Just a normal…




MM.
I FEEL BETTER.



GUESS IT'S GETTING LATE.

LET'S GO HOME, SAKURAI.

H-HOW CAN YOU DO ALL THIS?

...

THAT... THAT'S AMAZING, AMANO-KUN!

...DUNNO.





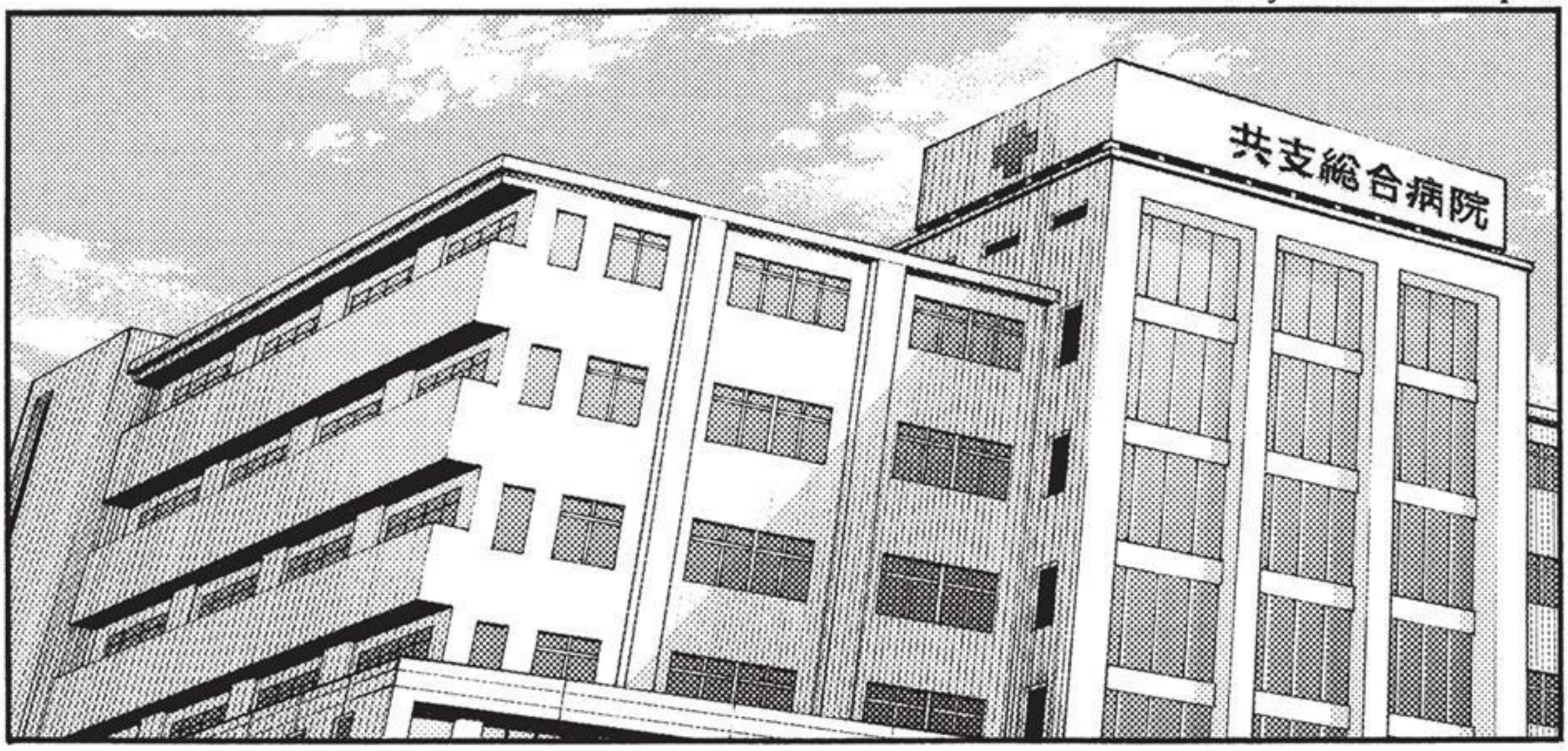
The six stories that appear in this volume are all very different from each other in an especially good way, and I had a lot of fun turning them into manga. You can really feel how Maekawa-san's idea of “the what-ifs of reality” is expanding our view of the world. I hope you can enjoy it with me.

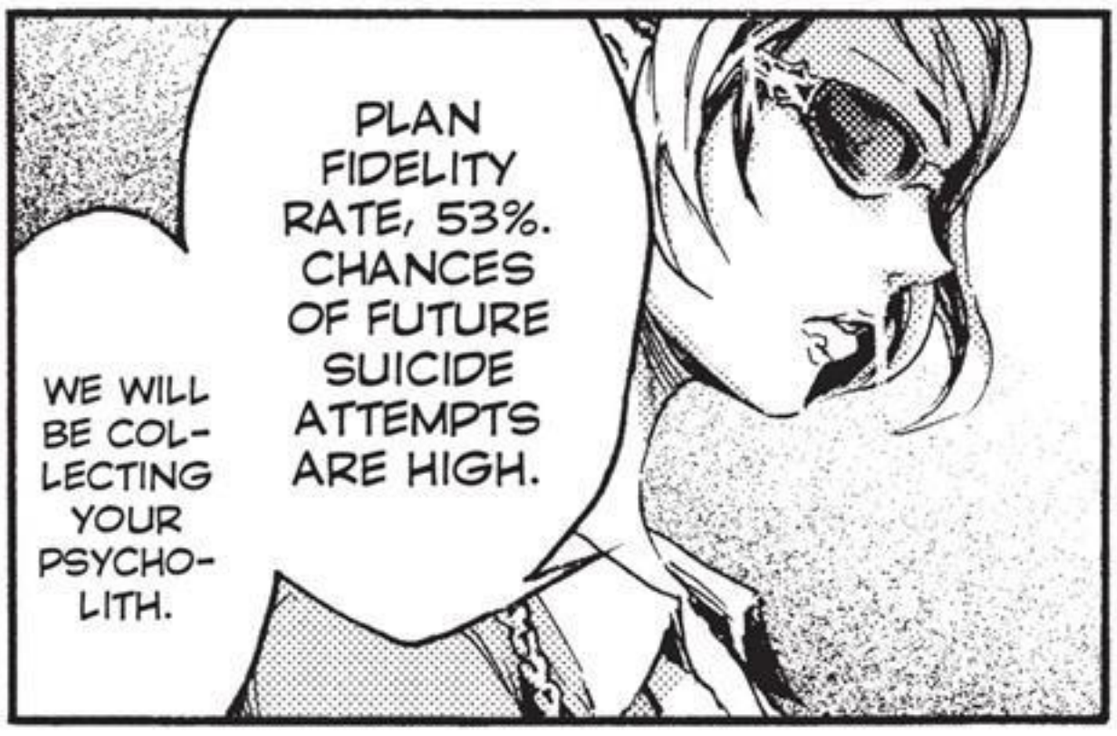
Jinsei Kataoka

Somehow or another, Livingstone has reached volume three. Because the story's theme is souls, I'd wondered if it was gonna be some kind of preachy, religious manga? Maybe a spiritual manga? Or horror? But I feel like in the end, it turned out to be a strange, mysterious manga that doesn't fit into any of those categories.

Chapter 14 A Broken Family

SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital









WE WILL KILL YOU.

SAVE YOU.

NOT THAT I'D RECOGNIZE YOU ANY-WAY.

WHO ARE YOU BROADS? NEW NURSES?

...HUH?

WHOA, HEY.

CLACK

WE'RE HERE TO COLLECT YOUR PSYCHOLITH, AND STOP YOUR UNPLANNED SUICIDE.

...HM? WAIT A SEC.

HUH?

WHAT?

FIRST OF ALL, I DON'T REMEMBER TRYIN' TO KILL MYSELF.

WHO *AM* I?

I SUSPECT IT WAS CAUSED BY HIS HEAD INJURY.

WE ONLY LEARNED HIS NAME FROM THE EXPIRED LICENSE WE FOUND ON HIM.

HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY CONTACTS ON HIS PHONE, EITHER.

SO WE DON'T KNOW IF HE HAS ANY FAMILY OR FRIENDS.

HE HAS AMNESIA?

病院

SIGN: General Hospital

...IF HE DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER ATTEMPTING SUICIDE, WE CAN'T GET HIS SOUL'S PERMISSION.

EVERY MINUTE OF DELAY WILL CHIP AWAY AT HIS PSYCHO-LITH.

...OUR JOB IS TO COLLECT HIS SOUL IN ONE PIECE.

WE HAVE TO GET HIS MEMORIES BACK TO HIM, AND QUICKLY.

NAME SOGABE, HARUHIKO
REG. DOM.
ADDR. TOKYO-TO, NERIMA-KU, OYAMASHITA 6-2-4, APT. B-212
ISSUED 10/03/1999
DOB: 09/2
EXPIRES 10-24-2002
DRIVER'S LICENSE
TOKYO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION

THIS ADDRESS... IT'S IN *THEIR* JURISDICTION.

AND SO,

YOU ARE TO FIND SOME CLUE THAT MIGHT HELP HIM GET HIS MEMORIES BACK.

AZUSA EBINA

OKAY?

WHY US?

IN WHICH CASE, HIS PSYCHOLITH WILL BE BROKEN.

...HE MAY TRY AGAIN AS SOON AS HIS MEMORIES ARE RESTORED.

AND IF HE WAS TRYING TO KILL HIMSELF...

JUDGING BY THE ADDRESS ON HIS LICENSE, I BELIEVE THAT IF A NEGATIVE POINT HAD CAUSED HIS SUICIDE ATTEMPT, IT WOULD BE IN YOUR JURISDICTION.

IN OTHER WORDS...

We're so busy.

ALL *WE* CAN DO IS KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

WE CAN'T LEAVE OUR POST.

Oh.

THAT WAS BLUNT...

Oo

WE NEED AN ERRAND BOY.

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MAN. WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HE?

BRING US PROOF OF HIS LIFE.

B-1

B-2

212

曽我部

NAMEPLATE: Sogabe

CREAK...

IS THAT A COMPLI-MENT?

Sigh

...THOSE EBINA SISTERS REALLY ARE SOME-THING.

HM?

OH, IT'S OPEN.

RATTLE

IT'S AN EXPRES-SION. FOR WHEN YOU'RE EXASPER-ATED.

Pee-yew.

...WHOA.

IT'S FILTHY.

NO...

IT'S TOTALLY CLEAN.

WHAT?

THERE'S NOT A SINGLE STAIN IN THE WHOLE PLACE.

AND THAT MEANS HE DIDN'T KILL HIMSELF BECAUSE OF A NEGATIVE POINT.

HE JUMPED DOWN FROM THIS BALCONY, RIGHT?

BUT IT'S CLEAN HERE, TOO.

search

TA

Tokieda

Toba Industries

Towada

NA

Nadzuka

Nasuo

BEEP

BEEP

I GUESS WE'LL LOOK INTO HIS ASSOCI-ATES...

hmmm

...WE CAN'T FOLLOW THE STAIN-BEASTS.

AND THERE'S NOTHING HERE BUT TRASH.

THERE'S NOTHING IN HIS PHONE HISTORY FOR OVER TWO YEARS,

AND THE LAST CALL HE GOT WAS THE GAS COMPANY DEMANDING PAYMENT.

HE RETIRED FROM HIS JOB FIVE YEARS AGO.

I ASKED AT HIS COMPANY, AND THEY SAID HE WASN'T REALLY IN TOUCH WITH ANYONE.

LOOKS LIKE HIS PARENTS HAVE ALREADY PASSED ON, AND THEY HAD SOLD THE HOUSE.

BOOP

A FUGITIVE ?

IS HE A HERMIT? A SPY FOR THE CIA?

HE HAS NO CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

GLOOOOM

...

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH CLUES.

RUSTLE

...HM?

JUST WHO *IS* THIS MAN?

REG

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER:

IDENTIFICATION:

GENDER: Male

MEMO

PLAN FIDELITY RATE
53%

A CLUE.

SAKURAI... I THINK I FOUND SOME-THING.

SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital

FAMILY...

I HAVE A FAMILY?

AND THE FACT THAT NO ONE'S COME TO SEE ME MUST MEAN THEY REALLY DON'T CARE FOR ME.

NO... NOT A THING.

BUT HEY. NOBODY'S SMILIN' IN THIS PICTURE.

SOGABE-SAN.

DO YOU... REMEMBER ANYTHING?

...OH.

IS THAT HOW IT IS?

THEN WE SHOULD ASSUME YOU'RE DIVORCED.

...THE DATE ON THAT PHOTO-GRAPH IS 15 YEARS AGO. THAT'S VERY OLD.

IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY RECENT PICTURES ...

...BUT I STILL DON'T REMEMBER.

THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING, I MIGHT AS WELL BE...

SCRITCH SCRITCH SCRITCH

UGH, THIS SUCKS.

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO TO ME, JUST HELP ME REMEMBER WHO I AM.

YOU GOTTA HAVE SOME-THING. LIKE HYPNOSIS, OR ELECTRO-SHOCK THERAPY?

WE CHECKED AROUND THE LOCAL CORNER STORE AND SUPERMARKET, BUT WE DIDN'T FIND ANY NEGATIVE POINTS OR ANYONE WHO KNEW HIM.

NO.

...ANY OTHER CLUES?

I CAN BARELY WALK ANOTHER STEP AS IT IS...

THEN WHY NOT FOLLOW OUR ONE LEAD—FIND THE FAMILY AND ARRANGE A MEETING?

Did you hear a word I said?

UMM... YOU MEAN YOU WANT US TO DO IT?

OF COURSE YOU DO.

WA-PSH

WELL, GET TO IT, BOYS.

Hm.

GOOD IDEA, NAGISA.

IF YOU NEED FARE FOR TRANSPORTATION, WE CAN PROVIDE IT FOR YOU.

?

...

SO... ARIMA-SAN.

COULD YOU FIND THE FAMILY'S CURRENT ADDRESS?

BEE-BOP

BEE-BOP

...WE'LL HAVE TO CHECK AT CITY HALL?

UH, YES...

CLACK

...

A FAMILY FROM A PICTURE WE FOUND IN THE TRASH.

I DUNNO ABOUT THIS...

then what on earth knocked this man's soul off track?

If there isn't a negative point,

Is it possible that he…

...OH, HIM.

I'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THAT MAN.

SO WHAT?

HE'S A STRANGER TO ME NOW.

WHAT?

UHH... HARUHIKO SOGABE-SAN *IS* YOUR EX-HUSBAND, ISN'T HE?

I DON'T KNOW HIM.

...OH, HIM.

I'VE FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THAT GUY.

SO WHAT?

HE'S A STRANGER TO ME NOW.

WHAT?

UHH... HARUHIKO SOGABE-SAN *IS* YOUR FATHER, ISN'T HE?

I DON'T EVEN *WANT* TO KNOW HIM.

SLAM

SIGN: Kyōshi General Hospital

共支総合病院

OH.

THIS IS... SHIGEMI?

AND... NOBUNAGA.

...OH.

...

NOTHING TO SHOW FOR YOUR-SELVES?

WHEEZE

GASP

...THE FAMILY'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT SOGABE-SAN.

IT'S POSSI-BLE...

...THAT THEY DIDN'T *FORGET*, SO MUCH AS ERASE HIM FROM THEIR MEMORIES.

CLACK

CLACK

DOES THAT KIND OF THING REALLY HAPPEN?

?

...I'VE BEEN THINK-ING.

ABOUT WHO HE IS.

AND I SUS-PECT...

...HE'S NOBODY.

302

曽我部 晴彦

NAMEPLATE: Haruhiko Sogabe

...I SEE.

SO NO-BODY'S COMING.

...NO-BODY.

I REMEM-BERED.

...WELL, I GUESS NO ONE WOULD.

I DIDN'T CARE.

ABOUT SCHOOL, OR WORK.

MY FAMILY ONLY GOT IN THE WAY.

THEY WERE JUST A COUPLE OF SANDBAGS, USING UP MY MONEY.

I WAS PROBABLY IN THEIR WAY, TOO.

...YOU BROUGHT YOUR SOLITUDE ON YOUR-SELF.

IT WASN'T A NEGATIVE POINT, IT WAS YOUR WAY OF LIFE. YOU GRADUALLY WARPED YOUR OWN PLAN BY THE WAY YOU LIVED.

...THE BLADE YOU POINT AT OTHERS TURNS BACK ON YOURSELF.

OH.

THAT WAS AN ACCI-DENT.

SO, UM.

...WHY SUICIDE ?

I GOT DRUNK AND I FELL OFF THE BALCONY.

NO...

...I CAN'T COLLECT YOUR PSYCHOLITH WITHOUT YOUR SOUL'S PERMISSION.

HOWEVER LOW YOUR PLAN FIDELITY RATE MAY BE...

!

THEN YOU *WEREN'T* TRYING TO KILL YOUR-SELF?

I WAS SLOWLY...

I PROBABLY *WAS* TRYING TO KILL MYSELF.

VERY, VERY SLOWLY...

...

IF YOU WISH TO DIE, WE'LL KILL YOU.

IT WILL BE ENTIRELY PAINLESS.

PAIN-LESS?

LIKE EUTHA-NASIA?

MAN, THE SERVICE AT HOSPITALS THESE DAYS!

Ha ha!

PERMIS-SION, SHMER-MISSION.

YOU MUST ACKNOWL-EDGE THAT YOU'RE NOT OPPOSED TO DYING.

...MAY WE HAVE YOUR SOUL'S PERMIS-SION?

WHETHER I KEEP LIVING OR NOT, I'M ALREADY DEAD.

...I'VE COLLECTED THE PSYCHO-LITH.

...

SEE? PAIN-LESS.

flutter

...BECAUSE PAIN IS SOMETHING ONLY THE LIVING CAN FEEL.

HOLIDAY

...THAT WAS EX-HAUST-ING.

IT'S LIKE, REMEMBER THAT GRAFFITI LEGEND?

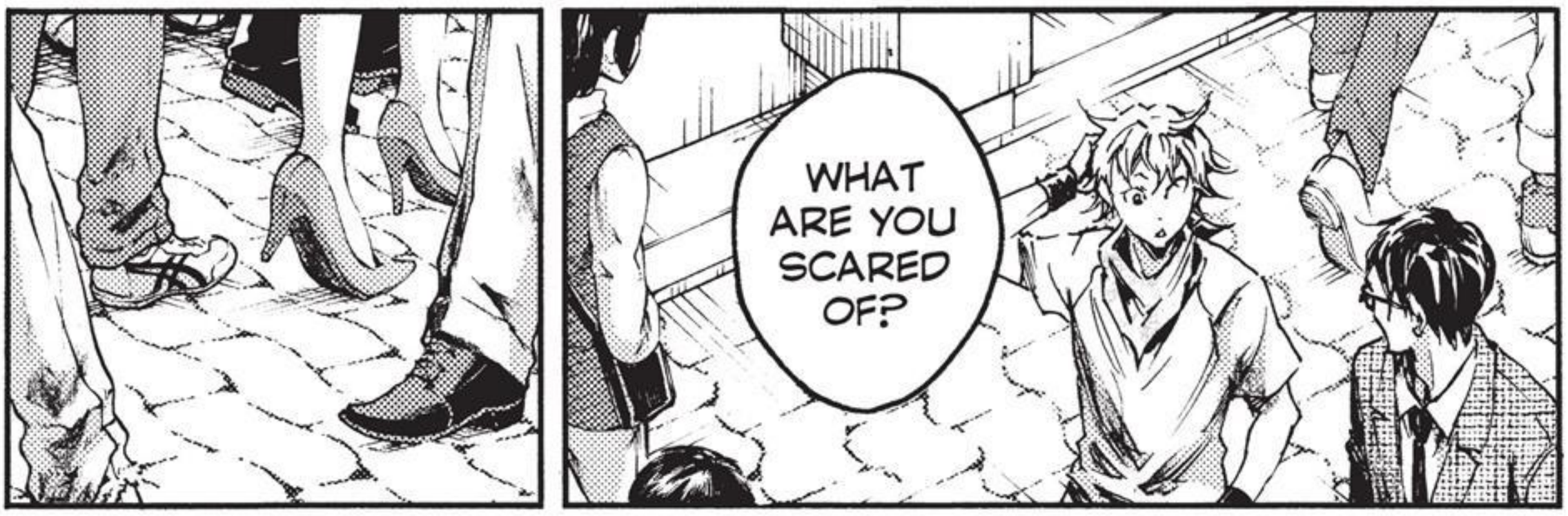
NO, I THOUGHT IT WAS INTEREST-ING.

SOME GUYS DIE LIKE THAT BUT GO ON LIVING IN PEOPLE'S MEMORIES.

BUT SOME PEOPLE DIE EVEN WHILE THEY'RE ALIVE.

IT DOES ?

...DON'T SAY THAT, AMANO-KUN. IT SCARES ME.


WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF?



Chapter 15 The Dead's Time

"NOW, NOW."

"DON'T BE SO PICKY."

"GO ON, DEAR."



RATTLE

PSHH

CREAK

HE KEEPS PAINTING THIS SAME PICTURE, AND IT'S NOT EVEN FOR WORK.

HE DOESN'T HAVE A SOUL, SO HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY MEMORIES, RIGHT?

AMANO'S ACTING WEIRD?

SIGN: Stone Shop

CAN: Strawberry BOTTLE: Soy Sauce

I won't drink that!

I like it!

OOH, A NEW FLAVOR!

PLEASE TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY, TOKIEDA-SAN!

FLNNN

HMMM ...

GLUP GLUP GLUP

?

HAVE YOU HEARD THAT SOMETIMES SOMEONE'S PERSONALITY CHANGES AFTER AN ORGAN TRANSPLANT?

OR SOMEONE STARTS SPEAKING THE DIALECT OF THE DONOR'S HOMETOWN, EVEN IF THEY'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.

SOMEONE WHO HATES VEGETABLES STARTS TO LOVE THEM.

YOU MEAN FLESH CAN HAVE ITS OWN MEMORIES, TOO?

HIS FLESH IS PROBABLY JUST TRYING TO TRACE ITS PAST, THAT'S ALL.

BUT THOSE MEMORIES ARE NOT RECORDED IN THE PSYCHOLITHS, SO THEY'RE NOT OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED.

ANYWAY, I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

...Ha ha.

RIGHT.

BRRRRIZG

ARIMA

Urk!

WHAT?

YOU CAUGHT AMANO-KUN SPRAYING GRAFFITI AGAIN?

OKAY, OKAY. I'M ON MY WAY TO CLAIM HIM.

BECAUSE TIME IS STOPPED FOR THE DEAD.

...IT'S PRO-GRESSED THAT FAR, EH.

...

NO, ARIMA-SAN! PLEASE DON'T ARREST HIM YET!

STOMP STOMP

HE COULD BE IN TROUBLE.

SIGN: Open

...HEY, DAD.

HM?

OH, KAE.

CLANG CLANG

I started hearing rumors about a spot under the bridge on the way to school, about two kilometers from here.

There's an old woman who always looks like she's talking to someone.

I was worried that she might have gone senile…but she hasn't.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS ?!

A few people have said that they saw something that vaguely resembles a figure there with her.

GHOST HUNTING ISN'T IN OUR JOB DESCRIP-TION.

She's really talking...

...

AND THERE'S NOT A SINGLE STAIN AROUND, EITHER.

BUT YOU CAN SEE IT, RIGHT?

SEE WHAT?

IT'S NOT LIKE TOKIEDA-SAN TO TAKE RUMORS SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY COME FROM SOME EMO-TIONAL HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS.

I FEEL LIKE HE'S DELIB-ERATELY GIVING US BUSY WORK...

JUST LOOK. THE GHOST.

...YOU BOYS.

NO, UM, WE'RE NOT DOING ANY-THING SUSPI-CIOUS...

UH, ER...

FZH

!

ZSH

ZSH

...UH

WAAAAH!

LOOKS LIKE THE TEA'S GONE COLD, SO WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO MY HOUSE?

I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU.

YOU CAN SEE HIM TOO, CAN'T YOU?

I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO MY HUSBAND.

We went out to walk the dog together, like we always did.

We don't have any children, so this was our precious family time.

OH, DEAR. THE RAIN IS COMING DOWN HARDER.

THE RIVER'S GOTTEN PRETTY HIGH.

IT HAPPENED SIX MONTHS AGO.

IT'S A GOOD THING WE BROUGHT OUR RAIN-COATS.

HEE HEE.

DON'T SOUND SO PROUD OF YOURSELF.

ZSHHH

IT'S NOT ALWAYS A BAD THING.

RAIN REALLY DOES FOLLOW YOU EVERY-WHERE.

REMEMBER ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, WHEN WE WENT TO THE BEACH TOGETHER?

!!

zhrr

!?

That was the last time I spoke to him.

…They found his body near the beach.

He jumped into the river to save our dog.

Maybe he had forgotten that he was a 70-year-old man.

I lost everything.

I just kept walking along the river that took my husband.

I even forgot what it was that I used to do every day.

...OH.

HOW SILLY OF ME...

I DON'T NEED AN UMBRELLA ANYMORE.

IT'S STARTING TO RAIN AGAIN.

OH.

KŌSUKE-SAN?

KŌSUKE-SAN, WHERE ARE YOU?

LET'S GO BACK TO SHORE.

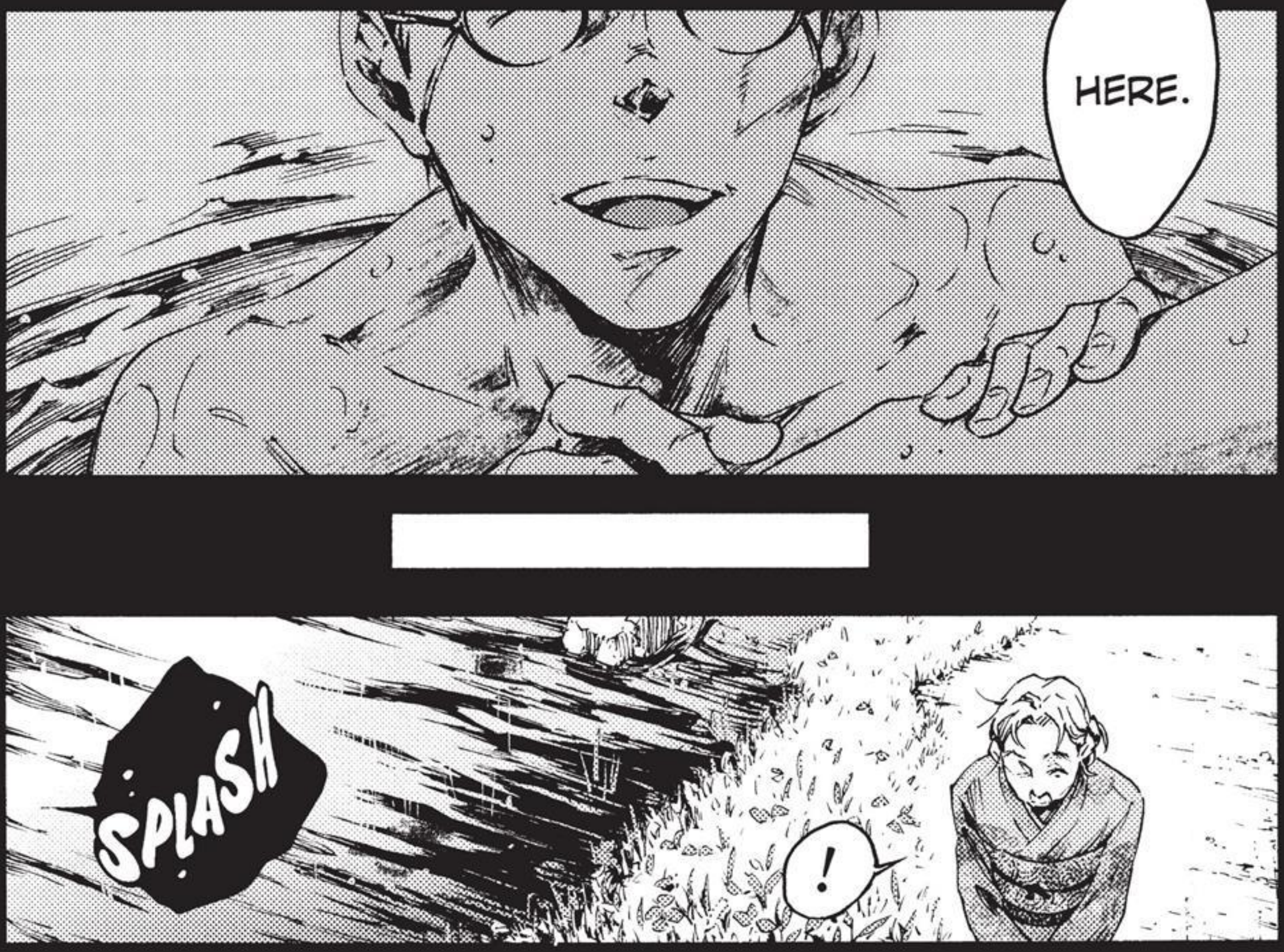
EEK!

SPLASH

PLEASE DON'T STARTLE ME LIKE THAT!

Ha ha.

ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE.


HERE.
SPLASH
!


But apparently it was just the opposite.
I thought the koi came to wake me from my faded dream of the past.

WHEN I GO TO THE RIVER, I GET TO SEE MY HUSBAND.

ALTHOUGH HIS AGE AND HIS CLOTHES ARE DIFFERENT EACH DAY.

BUT YOU SAW HIM, DIDN'T YOU?

CLUNK

Hee hee.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

...IMPOSSIBLE.

WHEN YOU LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE, YOU SEE SOME STRANGE THINGS.

COFFEE& RESTAURANT

...WHAT A SWEET OLD LADY.

NO, KAE-CHAN, THEY DON'T! THEY DON'T EXIST!

Why are you sparkling?

SO GHOSTS *DO* EXIST!

THE DEAD CAN'T TAKE ON A WILL OF THEIR OWN, MUCH LESS ACT ON IT.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE THE PAST. THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY INTERFERE WITH THE PRESENT OR THE FUTURE.

A SOUL IS JUST DATA— A RECORD OF ONE'S LIFE.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING...

OH...

BOO!

UGH! DID YOU GET THAT FROM MY DAD?

CAN'T YOU ADMIT THAT THERE ARE SOME MYSTERIES THAT CAN'T BE EXPLAINED?

They can't be explained, but maybe ghosts really do...?

Hmm.

It's true... There is the matter of Amano-kun's corporeal memories, and he *is* dead.

MAYBE THERE ARE SUCH THINGS AS GHOSTS.

...YEAH.

WHAT?

IT'S OBVIOUS WHAT THE GHOST IS.

IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS, IT'S NO MYSTERY.

NIBBLE

I THINK WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.

SPLASH

"HERE."

RUSTLE

"Ha ha."

"ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE."

"PLEASE DON'T STARTLE ME LIKE THAT."

!

I'M SORRY TO INTER-RUPT.

KZH-ZH...

FZH

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. NO NEED TO BE CONSID-ERATE OF A GHOST.

BE-SIDES...

...HEY.

I JUST WANT TO CHECK SOME-THING.

...THAT'S WHERE HE ALWAYS DISAPPEARS.

...YOU DON'T REALLY REMEMBER THE NEXT PART OF THAT SCENE, DO YOU?

NO... I DON'T.

IT HAPPENED A VERY LONG TIME AGO... MY MEMORIES ARE HAZY.

WHY DO YOU ASK?

?

LOOKS LIKE YOU GUESSED RIGHT, AMANO-KUN.

I KNEW IT.

"RETRACING THE PAST."

THE "GHOST" WAS A REPLAY OF MEMORIES...

I SUSPECT ...

YOU WERE DRAWN TO IT...AND IT WAS DRAWN TO YOU.

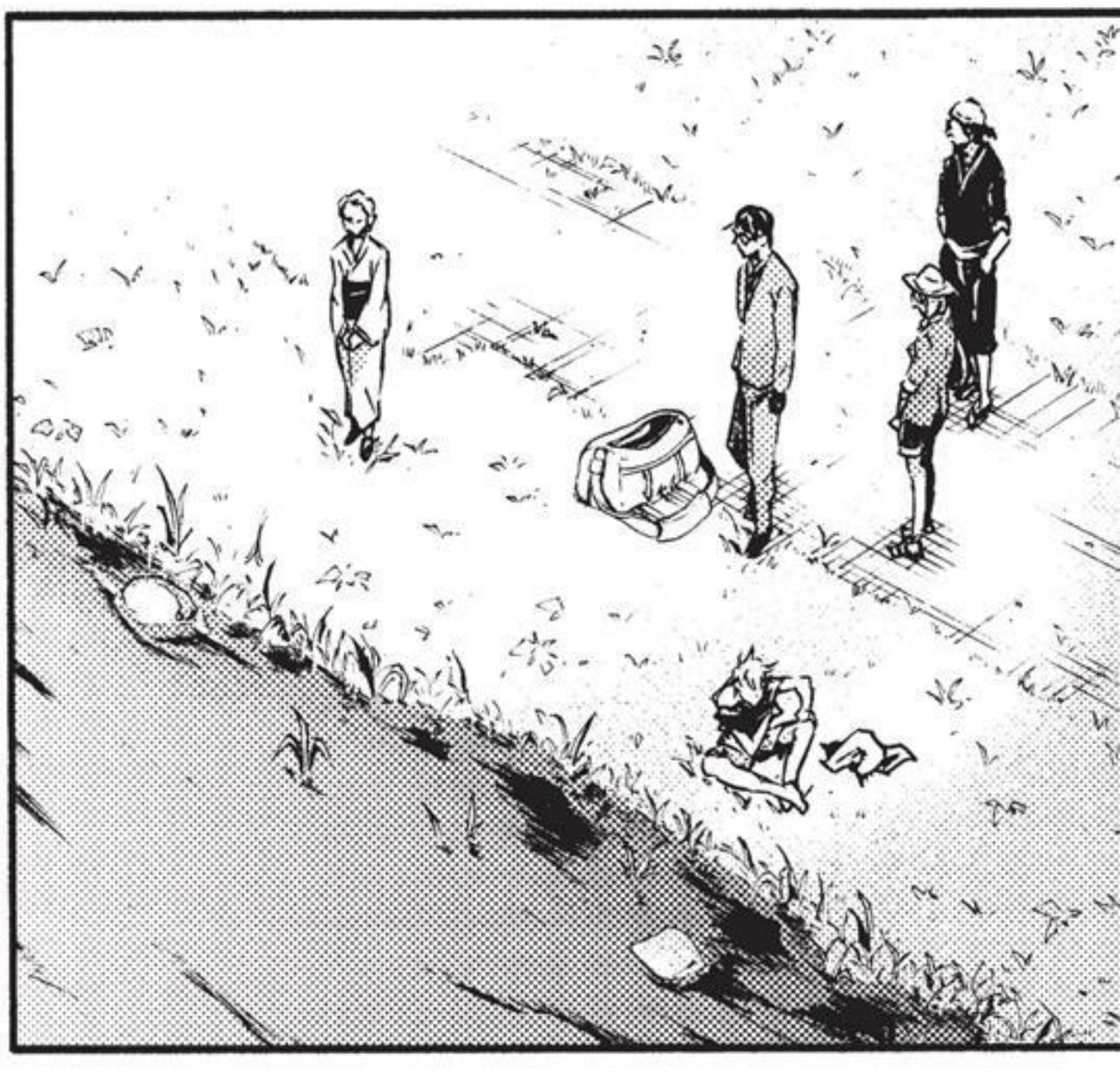
AND THERE'S A REASON THOSE MEMORIES CAN ONLY BE REPLAYED HERE.

YOUR HUSBAND'S PSYCHOLITH—HIS SOUL—IS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.




WELL, IT IS OUR JOB...
Hrrrm.


DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO COLLECT IT?
...SO THE GHOST WAS A PSYCHO-LITH ALL ALONG.



DAMN IT...

WELL, THE WATER'S STILL COLD.

AND YOU DON'T FEEL COLD.

I'm too convenient.

Go on, get.

Ugh, what a pain...

HEY.

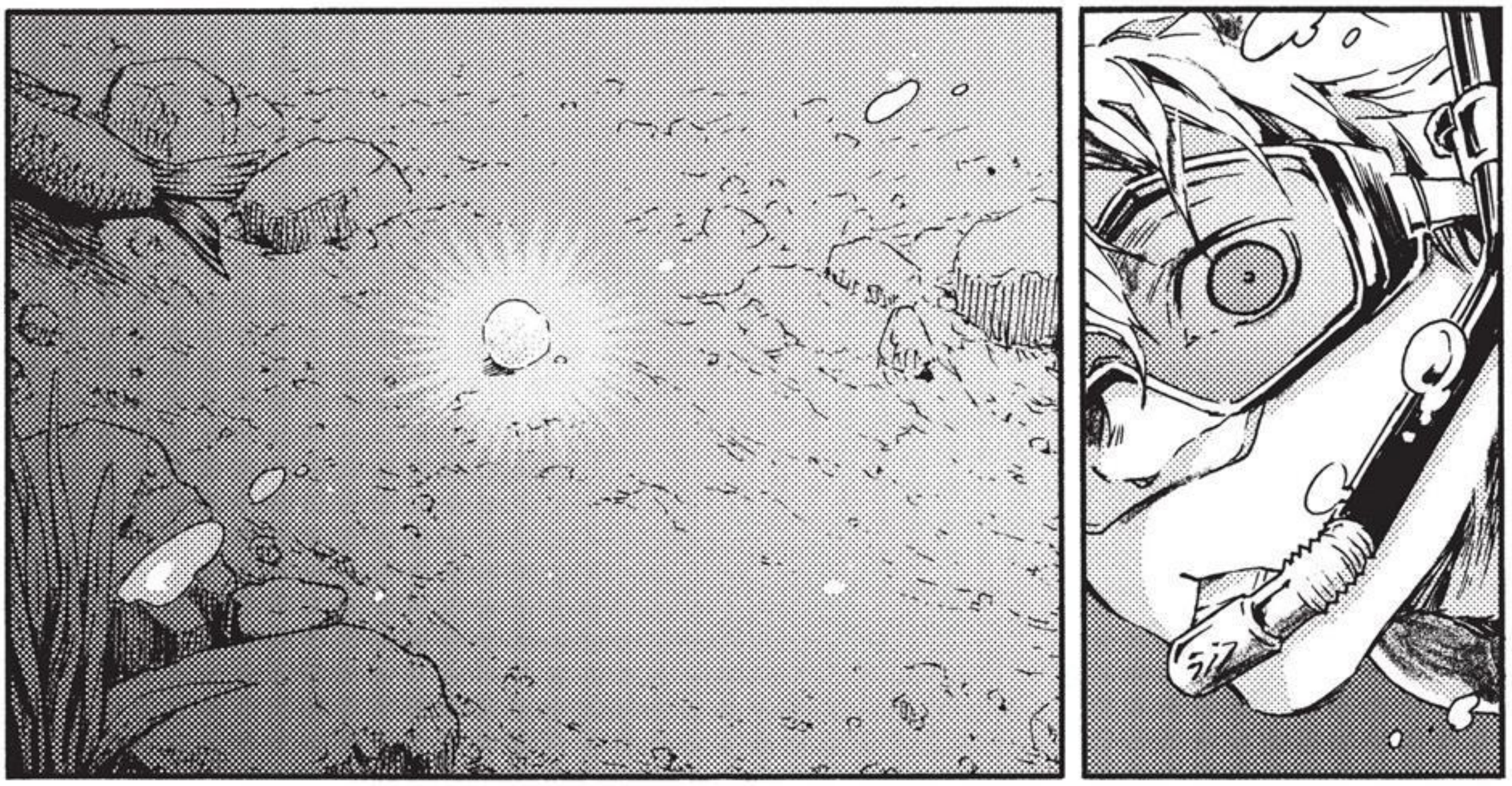
WHY DO *I* HAVE TO GO?

UGH, I WILL.

...

ゴボ. BLUB

...PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY HUSBAND.




...THE OLD LADY WILL LOSE HER REASON TO LIVE, DO YOU?
YOU DON'T THINK...


HER PRECIOUS "PAST."
SHE CARES SO STRONGLY FOR HIM THAT HER FEELINGS SUMMONED HIS GHOST.
YOU KNOW IT'S NOT THAT EASY.
WELL...
...LIFE GOES ON. SHE CAN FORGET THE PAST, AND MOVE ON TO THE FUTURE.

WHO COULD EVER FORGET THAT?

BLUB

JANGLE

snip

snip

HANG ON, I'LL GET YOU A TOWEL.

YOU NEED TO BE MORE CAREFUL— YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT A GOOD SWIMMER.

DID YOU FALL IN THE CANAL AGAIN?

OH, DEAR.

OKAY, MAKOTO ?

I GUESS I'M JUST...

YEAH, I'M FINE.

...

ROLL

?!

YOU OKAY, AMANO?

SPLASH

!!

COUGH!

COUGH!

...NOT A GOOD SWIMMER.

THIS...IS MY HUSBAND'S SOUL?

...

YES...

...MAYBE BECAUSE HE WAS SUCH A GOOD MAN.

...YES.

THAT COLOR, THAT SHAPE— IT'S VERY BEAUTI-FUL.

I'LL...

...NEVER SEE HIM AGAIN.

ぷる...

...?

RAIN?

drip...

drip...

BUT THERE'S HARDLY A CLOUD IN THE SKY...

SHHH...

I REMEMBER IT ALL NOW...

...OH.

ACTUALLY, I HAVE AN EVEN BIGGER SURPRISE.

Ha ha.

HERE.

...SORRY IT'S NOT WORTH MUCH.

BUT WILL YOU...

...COME WITH ME...

...AS I WALK ON INTO THE FUTURE?

"I MEAN..."

..."OF COURSE I WILL."

"HOW CAN I REFUSE A MAN WHO WOULD GIVE ME SUCH A BIG, BEAUTIFUL RING?"

...!

?

...IT'S ALL RIGHT, DEAR.

AS LONG AS I CAN TAKE YOUR MEMORY WITH ME...

..I CAN WALK ON INTO THE FUTURE.

Hee hee.

RAIN DID FOLLOW HIM EVERY-WHERE.

...NO WAY.

WHAT A COINCI-DENCE...

...YOU SEE SOME STRANGE THINGS.

WHEN YOU LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE...

For the dead, time is stopped.

For the living, time moves forward.

CLATTER

SO...

...WHICH AM I?



Chapter 16 A Listening Ear



じゃらRATTLE 川



ER...

OUR JOB IS TO *COLLECT* PSYCHO-LITHS, RIGHT?

SO WHY DO I HAVE TO READ THE STONES' MEMORIES?

I MEAN, THEY'RE BASICALLY ALL BAD MEMORIES.

IF YOU CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT IN THIS FIELD.

IT'S A VITAL PART OF THE JOB.

YES... BUT *WHY?*

GUYS LIKE US, ALL WE CAN DO IS READ.

IF COLLECTING WAS THE ONLY PART OF THE JOB, THEN ALL WE'D NEED ARE OUR PARTNERS—THE ONES WHO CAN SEE THE STAIN-BEASTS.

Hmm...

NOW I FEEL EVEN MORE USELESS...

...UH, SAKURAI.

STOP WHINING, PUT YOURSELF IN THE SOULS' CYCLE, AND THINK ABOUT IT.

CYCLE ...?

THAT REMINDS ME. WHERE'S AMANO?

FSH

SIGN: Watch for prowlers

WHEEZE WHEEZE

YOU KNOW I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT YOU, AMANO-KUN!

SERI-OUSLY, *STOP* GOING OFF ON YOUR OWN!

THERE YOU ARE!

STOMP STOMP

WHAT ARE YOU, A STALKER?

Seriously gross.

I DID IT BECAUSE YOU KEEP SHIRKING YOUR DUTIES TO PAINT GRAFFITI!

100% WRONG!

AND HEY, YOU FOUND ME FAST TODAY.

...I PUT A GPS TRACKER ON YOUR PHONE.

WHAT, ARE YOU CONFESSING YOUR LOVE TO ME?

That's really gross.

WRONG!

?

A leaf?

fip

I'M DOING MY JOB, TOO.

WHEN I WAS LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO PAINT,

I FOUND A LEAF WITH A *BUG* ON IT.

This?

I DON'T SEE ANY BUGS.

BECAUSE IT'S THE KIND ONLY *I* CAN SEE.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GARDEN.

IT'S LIKE AN OASIS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN URBAN JUNGLE.

Oooh...

MAYBE ONE WANDERED AWAY FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE AND ENDED UP HERE.

Hmmm.

ACTUALLY, AT A GLANCE, I DON'T SEE ANY MORE.

AND YOU SEE STAIN-BEASTS HERE?

UH, NO, I JUST FIND IT A LITTLE...

HELLO.

IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY VEGETABLE GARDEN?

...ENCHANT-
ING.

OH, I'M FLATTERED!

YOU KNOW, I JUST MADE SOME PIE WITH FRESHLY PICKED HERBS AND VEGETABLES. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?

IT'S ALL DELICIOUS!

ISN'T IT?

I'M SORRY FOR INTRUDING OVER A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT.

HE SAID HE FOUND AN UNUSUAL ONE.

UH... YES.

DOES THAT YOUNG MAN LIKE INSECTS?

May I have another piece?

I DIDN'T KNOW CHEMICAL-FREE VEGETABLES COULD BE THIS SWEET.

YES, BECAUSE I USE HIGH-QUALITY, ORGANIC FERTILIZER.

MAYBE THE BUGS FIND THEM EXTRA TASTY BECAUSE I DON'T USE CHEMICALS.

THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

I INVITE NEIGHBORS OVER ALL THE TIME. JUST TODAY, I'M OPENING THE GARDEN UP TO THE LOCAL PRESCHOOL.

ORGANIC? ISN'T THAT A LOT OF WORK?

YES.

BUT IT HELPS ME FEEL THAT HARMONY BETWEEN HUMANS AND NATURE.

WE EAT LIFE AND CREATE LIFE... I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLACE OURSELVES WITHIN THAT GREAT CYCLE.

AND TO UNDERSTAND OUR ROLE IN THAT CYCLE.

OH...OH, NO. I'M GETTING PHILO-SOPHICAL AGAIN.

I'M SORRY— THAT WAS WEIRD.

...NO.

I GET IT.

I REALLY DO.

...THANK YOU.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING US TODAY!

HELLO!

PLEASE COME IN!

MOCHIDA-SAN!

HELLO!

TO DONG DONG

YAAAY

GOOD LUCK IN YOUR POTATO DIGGING CONTEST!

HOW'D IT GO WITH THE "BUG"? IT WAS JUST A STRAY, RIGHT?

OH.

SAKU-RAI.

THEY'RE CRAWLING UP FROM UNDER THE SOIL.

SO THE STAIN MUST BE UNDER-GROUND.

WHAT ...?

SO YOU'RE SAYING ...

...THERE'S A DEAD BODY UNDER THE VEGETABLE GARDEN?

WHAT?

THEY'RE UNDER THE LEAVES,

AND ALL OVER THE GROUND.

...THE BODY WASN'T BURIED AFTER THE SOUL LEFT IT.

HE OR SHE DIED THERE.

IF THE STAIN IS UNDER-GROUND, THAT MEANS...

HUH...? BUT, AMANO-KUN... WAIT.

THEY WERE BURIED ALIVE.

gyoo

I PULLED ONE OUT!

SENSEI, I GOT A BUNCH!

YAY!

KYA HA!

HAAAAA

...

...SO... WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE NOW?

WAAAH

UH...

YEAH...

SQUEE SQUEE

IT'S PRETTY GRUE-SOME.

A SCENE OUT OF HELL, I GUESS.

WOULD YOU LIKE A REPORT?

...I'M EXPERI-ENCING IT RIGHT NOW.

URP...

THEY'RE GONNA EAT THOSE, AREN'T THEY?

I WONDER WHAT THAT'S GONNA FEEL LIKE.

NAH, I'M GOOD.

...WE'LL COME BACK TONIGHT WITH HELP.

NO, YOU KNOW WE CAN'T DIG UP A CORPSE NOW.

SO YOU WANNA DIG IT UP AND CLEAN IT?

...HEY.

WHAT KIND OF FER-TILIZER DO YOU USE HERE?

OH, I WAS JUST TELLING YOUR FRIEND...

SHUDDER

OH.

PLEASE COME BACK ANY TIME. YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME.

OH? YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?

UH... YES.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING US.

THE FERTILIZER'S MADE FROM SLOW-FERMENTED LIVING CREATURES.

CRUNCH

SHZSH

WE'RE USING HUMAN WAVE TACTICS TO FIND A CORPSE, HUH...

I'M JUST HERE TO DO THE CLEAN-ING.

DIG-GING'S A PAIN.

WHY AM *I* HERE?

I'M SLEEPY.

THIS IS SO BAD FOR MY SKIN.

FOR THE UNAVENGED SOUL, AND FOR MY BROKEN HEART!

COME ON, EVERY-BODY! HELP DIG!

YEAH, YEAH, OKAY.

SHFF

KONK

SHFF

SHFF

ZSH

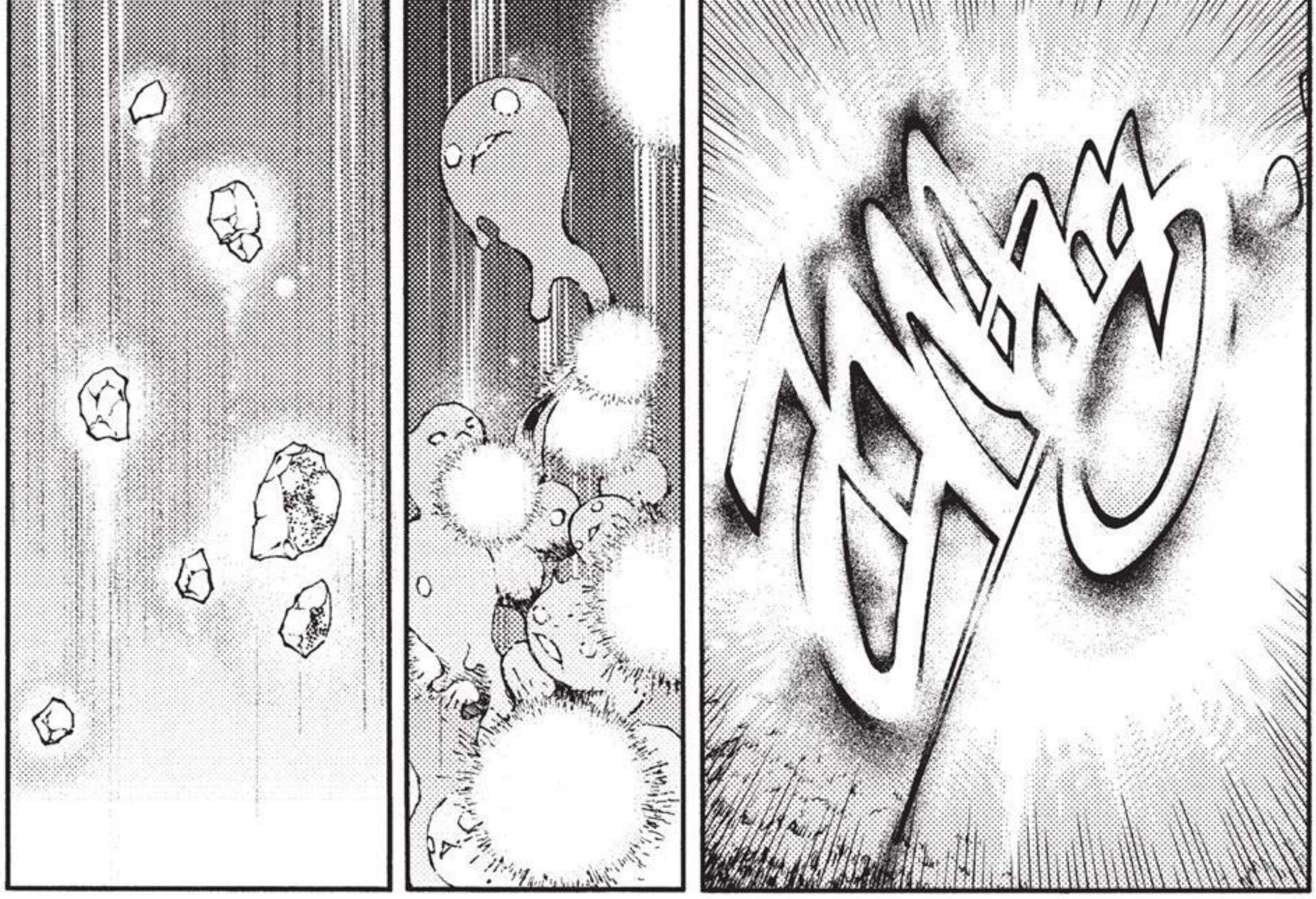
PSHH

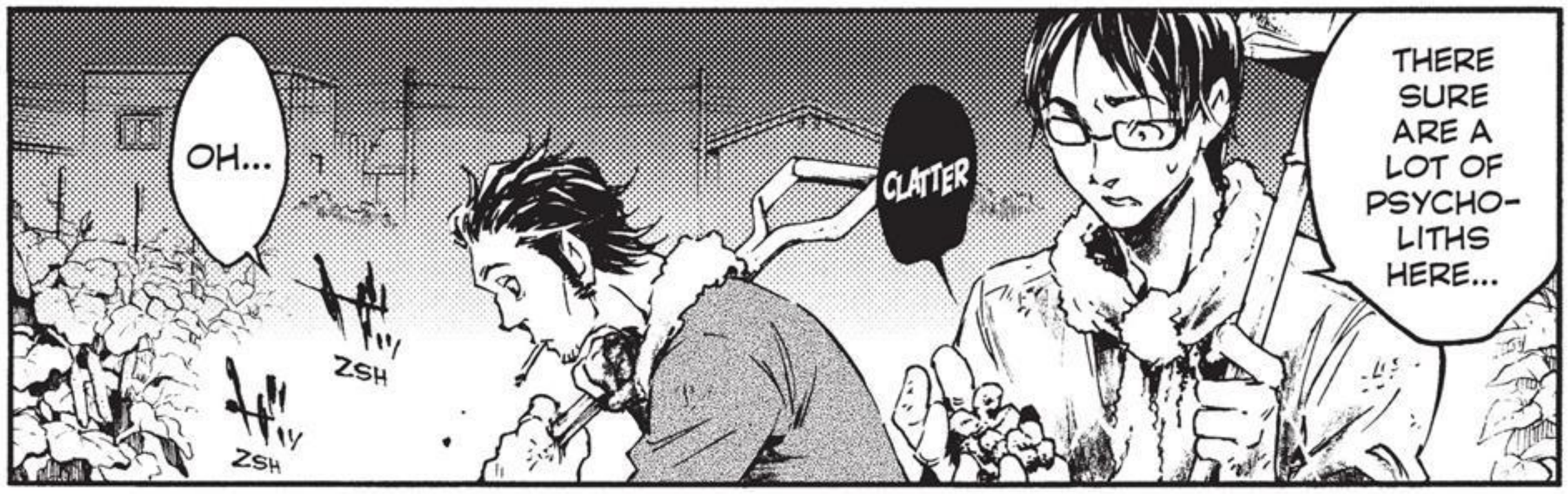
RATTLE

RATTLE

...

FOUND IT.

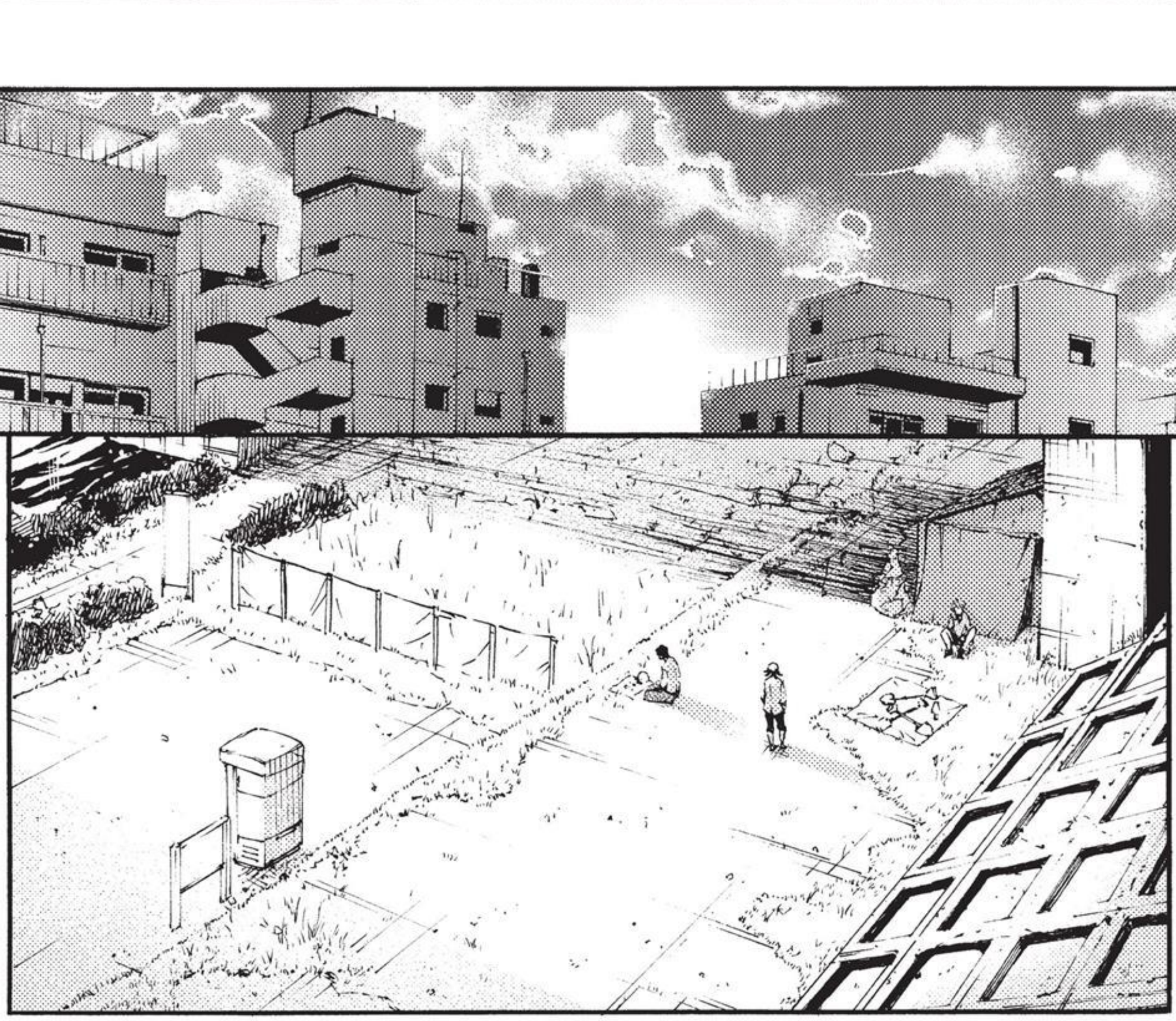



OH...
ZSH
ZSH
CLATTER
THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF PSYCHO-LITHS HERE...


...MAYBE 'CAUSE THERE'S ABOUT THREE PEOPLE DOWN THERE?


"LOHAS BEAUTY IS HOMICIDAL MANIAC."
HOW'S THAT FOR THE HEAD-LINE?


KA-CLANG



CLATTER

...I DON'T WANT TO READ THESE.

A virtual "buried alive" experience... three times over...

SNORRRRE

WHO WOULDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS?

SO WHAT'S THE POINT?

IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN READ THEIR MEMORIES AND THEN GO TELL SOMEONE ABOUT IT.

SERIOUSLY, WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS JOB?

THIS JOB IS A TOTAL TRAUMA FACTORY.

Sun's already up.

...YOU'VE BEEN GRUM-BLING FOR TWO HOURS NOW.

mutter

mutter

BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE READING THE PSYCHOLITHS WILL HELP US DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

THERE'S NO POINT.

...THEY'RE ALREADY DEAD.

I HAVE TO READ ALL THESE PEOPLE'S DEATHS.

AND EVERY TIME, I HAVE TO EXPERIENCE A NEW KIND OF VICARIOUS TRAGEDY.

Whew ...

...

...HUH ?

IT'S OKAY.

...SORRY FOR WHINING AT YOU.

I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER NOW.

MAYBE YOUR COMPLAIN-ING IS A MINIATURE "DEATH."

YOU PUT THEM IN WORDS, AND THE BAD FEELINGS LEAVE YOU.

I'M USED TO IT. FROM MY OLD JOB.

OH.

...

SO OUR JOB...

...IS TO LISTEN TO THE DEAD'S COMPLAINTS?

WE JUST LISTEN...

...AND FEEL WHAT THEY FELT.

CLATTER

CLENCH

READING THE PSYCHO-LITHS...IS A WAY OF SHOWING OUR RESPECT.

...PER-HAPS.

THAT WAY, THE SOULS THAT DIDN'T GET A PROPER DEATH ARE FREE TO MOVE ON TOWARDS THEIR NEXT LIFE...



...WELL, THAT'S A BETTER LOOK ON HIS FACE.

THERE WERE ONLY MEMORIES FOR TWO?

SIGN (RIGHT): **Let's all protect the safety of our town!**
SIGN (RIGHT): **Traffic Safety, Accident Prevention**

DOES THAT MEAN ONE OF THEM WAS KILLED SOME-WHERE ELSE?

OR ONE OF THE DEATHS WAS PART OF ITS SOUL'S PLAN?

BUT THERE WERE THREE BODIES, RIGHT?

RIGHT ...

I CAN'T LISTEN... TO THAT PERSON'S VOICE.

IF BEING MURDERED IS SOME-ONE'S FATE, IT'S MORE THAN I CAN HANDLE.

MOCHIDA

YES.

THOSE VOICES MAY NOT REACH ME...

OH.

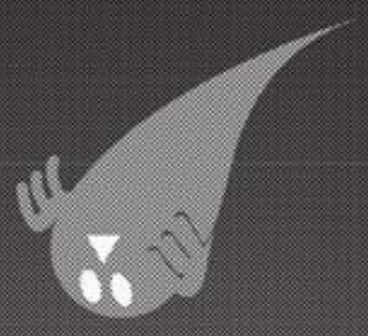
IS THAT WHY YOU HANDED THINGS OVER TO ARIMA?

...BUT HE CAN LISTEN TO EVERY DETAIL IN COURT.

CRUNCH

CAR: Police

THAT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY DAMN GOOD.



Chapter 17 What the Tool Has to Say

Whew ...

CLATTER

SIGN: Stone Shop

sigh

I'M FINALLY DONE READING TODAY'S PSYCHO-LITHS...

HEY, SAKU-RAI.

READ *MY* PSYCHO-LITH.

...?!

...WHAT? THEY'RE NOT PICTURE BOOKS.

BE-SIDES,

I CAN'T READ THE SOULS OF *LIVING* PEOPLE.

WRING

WRING

...!

IS SOME-THING WRONG ?

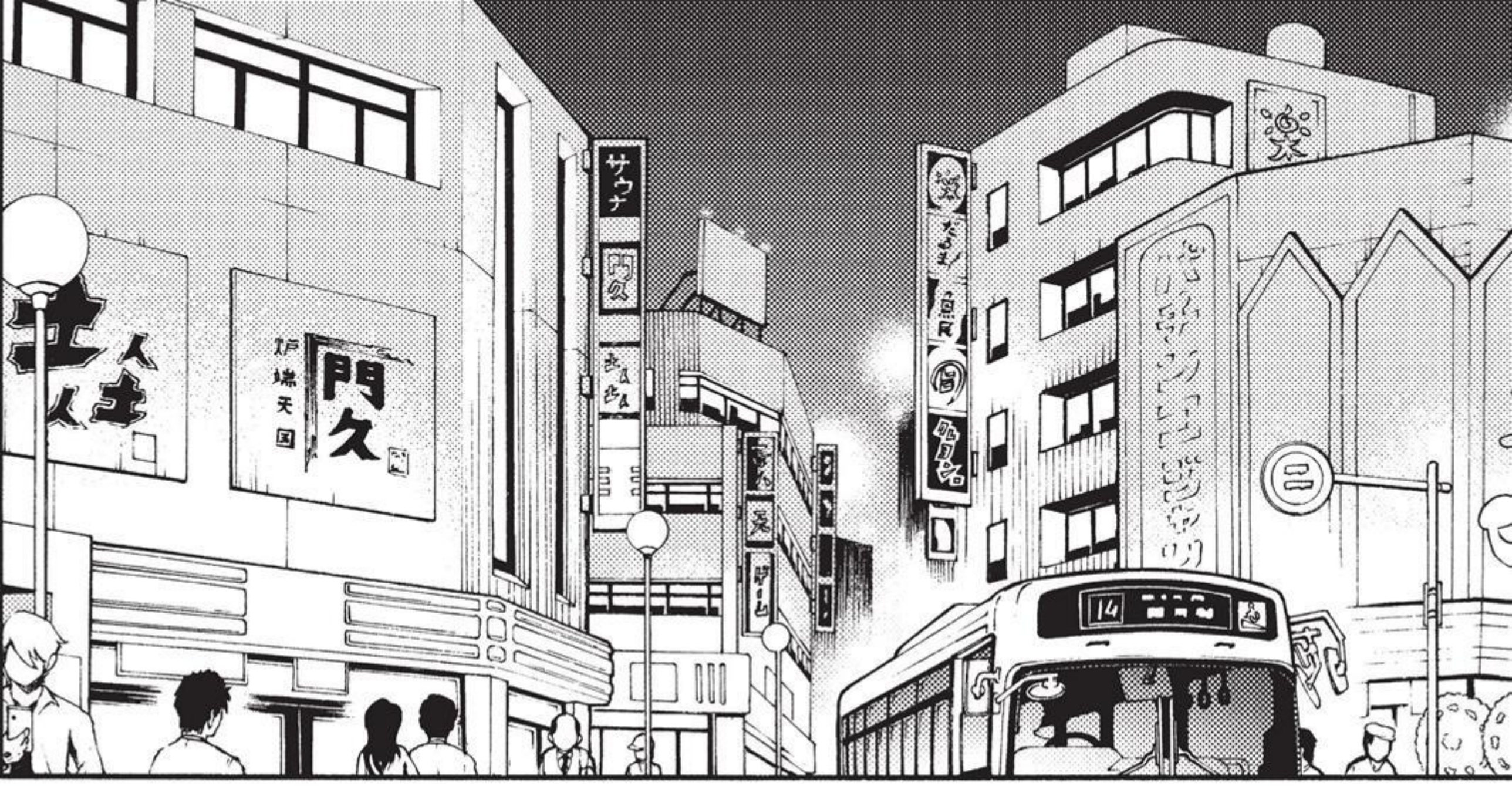
RUSTLE

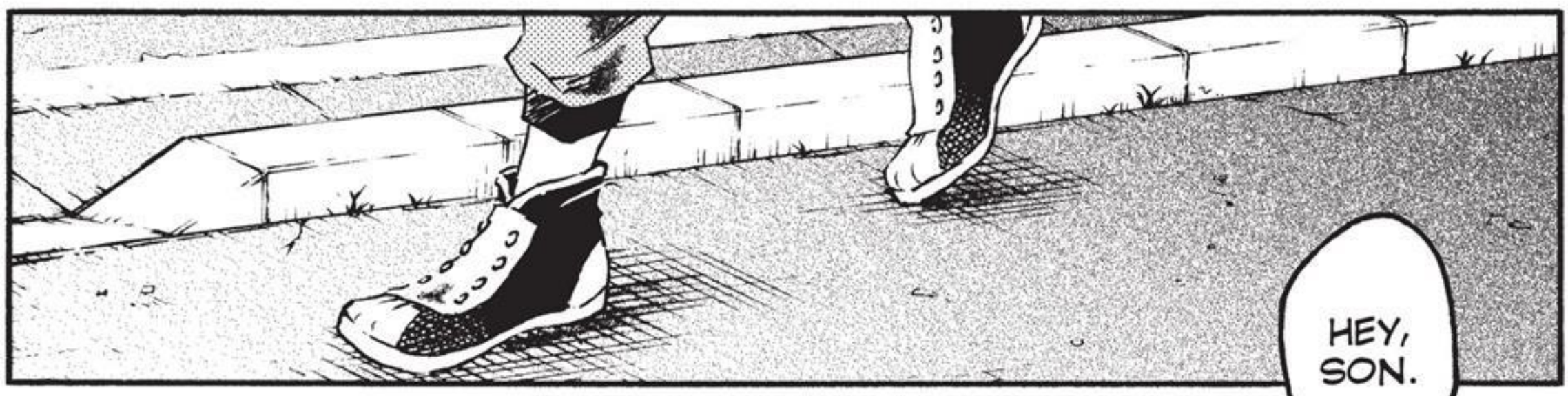
...NO.

I think that was when he knew it.

NOT REALLY.

That was when Amano-kun knew he was going to "disappear."


サウナ
門久
戸端天国
門久
14


HEY, SON.


HEY.
I WANNA TALK TO YOU.
WHERE'D YOU COME FROM? WHERE'RE YOU GOING?
DO YOU HAVE ANY ID OR A STUDENT CARD?
GOOD EVENING. MAY I HAVE A MINUTE?
YOU'RE A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WANDERING AROUND AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?

I WONDER WHERE I CAN FIND...

...SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ME.

NO. WHY WOULD I?

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MYSELF.

...Ugh.

MAN, YOU'RE ANNOY-ING.

GRAB

STOP! GIVE ME YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS!

...SO YOU'RE ON A "JOURNEY TO FIND YOURSELF," EH?

THAT'S WHAT WE CALL RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME!

吉原家

カラオケ

YOU COME BACK HERE!

HEY!

CLANK

HEY!

BRRRING

SIGN (TOP): Ramen Mentokken SIGN (BOTTOM): Ramen

HE'S GONE OUTSIDE YOUR TERRITORY.

AMANO'S PHONE IS SOME-WHERE IT SHOULDN'T BE.

BEEP

TOKIEDA-SAN?

...?

...IF YOU WANT WORK, I CAN FIND SOME, OR MAKE SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO!

YOU'LL HAVE SO MUCH WORK YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO SLEEP!

IT'S PROBABLY JUST HIS USUAL WANDERING.

...OR HAS SOME WORK COME UP?

RATTLE

...WHAT'S GOING ON?

...DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO BRING HIM BACK!

DOKOKO

gps.dokoru.com

HUFF

HUFF

...IT'S PROGRESSING FASTER THAN I THOUGHT.

AMANO IS TRYING TO GET HIS MEMORIES BACK.

IT'S AGAINST THE LAWS OF NATURE FOR "LIVING" FLESH TO REMEMBER WHEN IT "DIED!"

HE MOVES AROUND FAST!

...DARN IT!

...WAIT A MINUTE, TOKIEDA-SAN, PLEASE.

YOU MEAN...

WE'LL HAVE TO *DISPOSE* OF HIM?

AND WHEN YOU LOSE SOMETHING IMPORTANT YOU GET "SAD", RIGHT?

HUH? IS HE MAD?

...NO, HE WOULDN'T BE.

?!

CRASH

THE SIGNS WERE ALL THERE!

I SHOULD HAVE FIGURED IT OUT SOONER!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SACHI?

HUH?

WOOF!

WOOF

WOOF!

NNNN

CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP
...
BUT HE SURE DOES EAT A LOT.
IS THE FOOD THAT GOOD, SON?
HE SAYS HE'S FINE, SO HE'S FINE.
...SAY, DEAR.
HE'S A RUN-AWAY, ISN'T HE?
MAYBE WE SHOULD ASK THE POLICE TO...?

THIS IS WHAT "GOOD" TASTES LIKE, HUH.

...

OH, I GET IT.

HM?

...?

THAT PICTURE ...

...

I HAVE NO IDEA WHEN HE'LL BE BACK HERE AGAIN...

I SURE DO MISS HIM.

OH, THAT'S MY SON.

HE TRAVELS AROUND A LOT, PLAY-ING IN A BAND AND SUCH.

I THINK THIS IS FROM WHEN HE WAS WORKING AT AN AUTOMOBILE FACTORY...

DOWN IN OKINAWA.

AMANO-KUN

BRRRRING...

AMANO-KUN'S PHONE ...

BRRRRING

BRRRRING

ZSH

HE SHOULD STILL BE NEARBY!

GET HIM SO FOCUSED HE FORGETS ALL HIS FEELINGS AND MEMORIES.

THE ONLY WAY TO STOP HIS DISPOSAL IS TO MAKE HIM FOCUS ON WORK.

NAMEPLATE: Tōgen

桃元

FAMILY ...

BUT I BET SOME-ONE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

EVEN YOU'VE GOT A FAMILY, HAVEN'T YOU?

...WE DO HAVE AN EXTRA FUTON.

B-DMP

SHING

...gh ?!

... ngh.

Ah?

wobble

Jo...

?

HEY, WHAT'S WRONG ?

ARE YOU IN SOME KIND OF PAIN?

Huff ...!

Huff ...!

STAGGER

HEY, SON.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?

...

SO, HEY ...

YOUR SON... I BET HE'LL BE BACK.

I THINK EVERY-ONE...

...WANTS TO GO BACK HOME.

SO YOU'RE GOING HOME, TOO?

...

...I MEAN, THE FOOD TASTES REALLY GOOD.

...THANKS FOR DINNER.

THAT'S RIGHT. I'M...

HUFF...

...GOING HOME...

RATTLE

AMANO-KUN!

WAIT!

BAH

WHAT ABOUT OUR JOB?!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING FROM ME?!

I TOLD YOU, WE HAVE TO DO IT TO-GETHER!

WHERE ...

...DID YOU LEARN...

DASH

I'M ON STRIKE!

WHAM

...THAT WORD ?!

I CAN'T SEE STAIN-BEASTS.

OR REMOVE PSYCHO-LITHS. I NEED YOU.

PLEASE... PARTNER.

...PLEASE.

sigh

I CAN'T DO MY JOB WITHOUT YOU.

LET'S GO HOME.

I'LL BUY YOU NEW VIDEO GAMES!

AND NOT JUST GAMES!

I'LL BUY YOU A NEW CONSOLE !!

...I WON'T MAKE YOU DO IT FOR FREE.

...

WE'RE BOTH WORKING HARD!

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH GETTING A FEW BENEFITS!

IN FACT, WE DESERVE IT!!

AND THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL TOKIEDA-SAN TO CONVINCE...

...

I KNOW!

HOW ABOUT A BICY-CLE?!

I'M TIRED OF SHARING A RIDE, TOO!

YOU'LL GET YOUR OWN BICYCLE!

A TRIP.

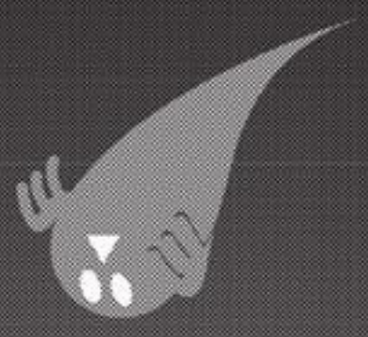
...A TRIP ?

I'LL GET BACK TO WORK, IF YOU LET ME GO ON A TRIP.

WHAT ?

WHERE WOULD YOU GO ?


Tokyo Intern
PIB
FROM.TO
HANEDA → OKINAWA
ANL 877
CLASS
Y
ADULT ONE-WAY FARE
TIME
DEPARTS AT 11:36
FARE CHARGE (TAX INCLUDED)
¥19800
CONFIRMATIO NUMBER
0226
151857
U MAY USE SELF CHECK-IN, LOCA
ARDING RESTRICTIONS SUC



From the author

And because we don't really know what options are available to other people, we satisfy ourselves with the limited choices set before us. In that sense, you could say that most of our lives are already decided.

Still, it can feel pretty bad to hear someone say we're free to choose things like what we wear and what we eat each day while so much of our life is set in stone. Maybe the reason people suddenly decide to travel is that they want to fight against that plan.

The same goes for Amano-kun.

This story uses the concept of a “plan” that determines most of a person's life. How does that compare to reality? The world is overflowing with possibilities, and we have the free will to choose our lives from those myriad options. Yes, that's how it is.

But when compared to the size of the world and its infinite possibilities, human flesh is just too small. Our choices are actually rather limited by little things like where we were born. The options available in a Tokyo suburb are completely different than the ones in a Brazilian slum. Even just in Japan, the child of a businessman has different options than the child of a kabuki actor.

Tomohiro Maekawa

From Niigata prefecture.

A writer and producer who writes slice of life stories that take place in supernatural settings. He has a wide range of work, from *Super Kabuki II* with Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, to modern theatre written in collaboration with Yukio Ninagawa.

Chairman of the Ikiume theatre troupe, his *Taiyou [The Sun]* won the grand prize in the Yomiuri Drama Awards.

Translation Notes

Sakurai's contacts, page 78

For readers who may be wondering about the order of names on Sakurai's phone, it's in alphabetical order—or more accurately, it's in syllabary order. Because Japanese uses a different writing system, the sounds represented by that system fall in a different order than the alphabet used in English, and so T's come before N's.

Hermit, page 79

More specifically, Sakurai wonders if this Sogabe person is a *sennin*, which is like a hermit, but tends to be more mystical. Even in purely practical terms, a *sennin* is someone who has withdrawn from the outside world, but the word can also refer to an enlightened person, often one who has gained immortality and magical powers.

Posthumous name, page 111

The pillar like object next to the picture of the old woman's late husband displays his *kaimyo*, which can be translated as "posthumous name." Japanese Buddhists, upon their departure from this world, are given a new name to take with them to their next life. The name is often made up of several Chinese characters that each have their own, specific meaning to describe several qualities of the deceased.



STORY BY
TOMOHIRO MAEKAWA

ART BY
JINSEI KATAOKA

4

FROM THE CREATOR OF *DEADMAN WONDERLAND*

LIVINGSTONE

DEADSTONE

4

Story: Tomohiro Maekawa

Manga: Jinsei Kataoka

Chapter 18: Time for Resolve 3

Chapter 19: Memory's Fuse 33

Chapter 20: Second Death 63

Chapter 21: Two Realities 103

Final Chapter: My Home Town 147

RUSTLE

全空輸航空券
ANA PASSENGER TICKET
FROM/TO HANEDA → OKINAWA
9871575185715
¥19800
11:36
0226
WAY FARE
※※※※※ ANA NAHA AIRPORT AGENT FACE)

AMANO'S GOING TO OKINAWA TO FIND HIS ROOTS.

WELL, THIS ISN'T A SIGHT-SEEING TRIP.

...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?

...THE KID'S A "BOMB" NOW.

...?

...YES, SIR.

I CAN'T JUST WATCH WHILE AMANO IS DISPOSED OF.

石屋

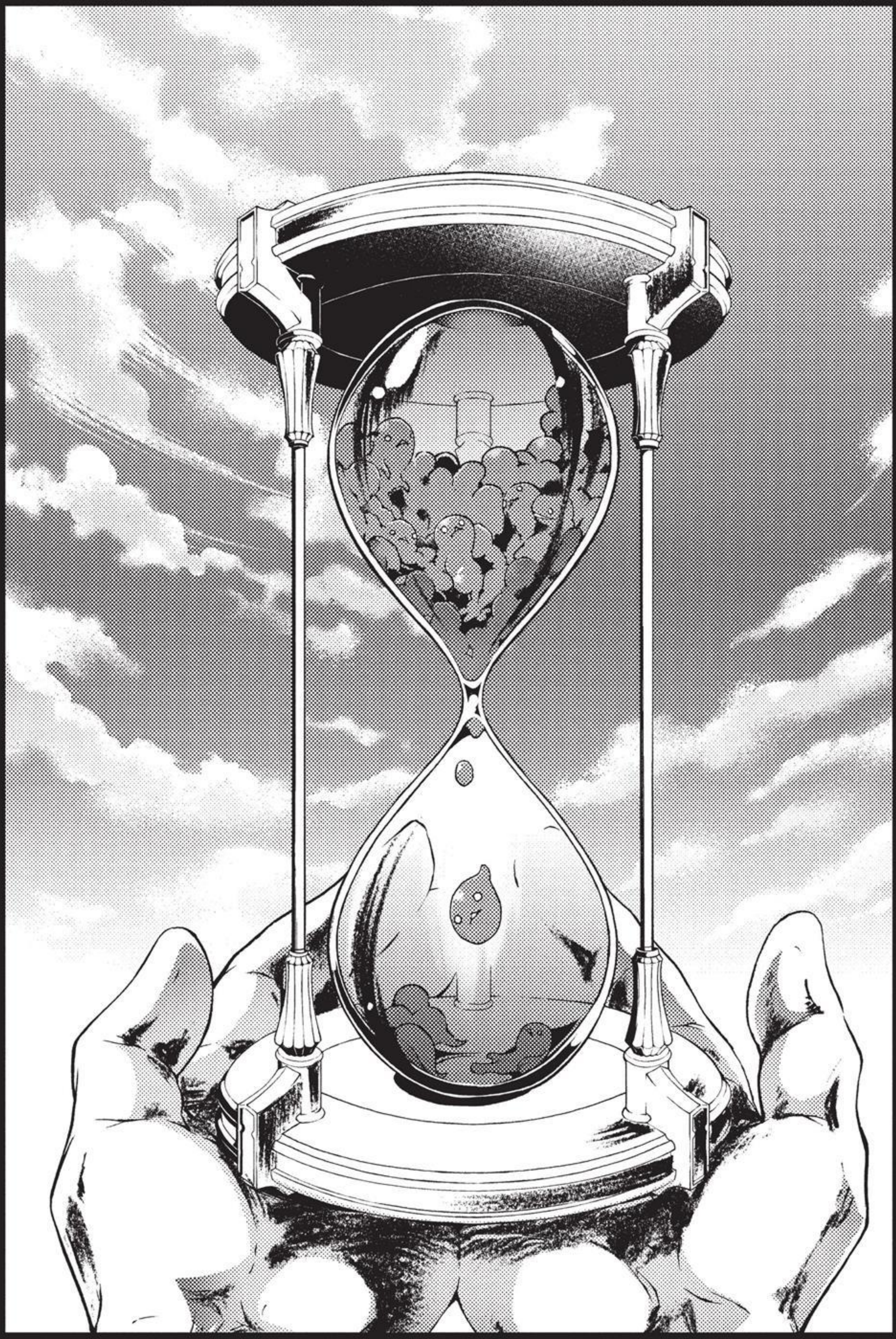
THAT'S NOT ALL...

SIGN: Stone Shop

AND *YOU'RE* GOING TO STOP HIM.

CAN: Persimmon

Chapter 18 Time for Resolve



4

FLIGHT 877 TO OKINAWA WILL BE DEPARTING SHORTLY.

ALL PASSENGERS PLEASE HURRY TO GATE 18.

SHAKE SHAKE

UM... SIR?

YOU'RE HOLDING UP THE LINE.

WE...

WE'RE NOT GOING TO CRASH, ARE WE?

P...

PLANES ARE SAFER THAN CARS, RIGHT?

ANA

NO!

THAT'S TOO FAST FOR A HUMAN BEING! MODERN CIVILIZATION IS NOT NATURAL!

TOKIEDA-SAN TOLD ME ABOUT IT A WHILE BACK!

YOU GET MORE TIRED SITTING ON A BULLET TRAIN FOR TWO HOURS THAN SITTING IN A MOVIE THEATER FOR TWO HOURS, RIGHT?

YOUR SPIRIT *SHIFTS*!

THAT'S BECAUSE HIGH-SPEED, LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORTATION CARRIES YOUR BODY, BUT IT LEAVES YOUR SOUL BEHIND!

HURRY UP, SAKURAI.

IT'S ONLY TWO AND A HALF HOURS.

AND JET LAG IS JUST ANOTHER INSTANCE OF THAT...

...WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, MISTER?

YOU'RE SCARED OF FLYING?

LOSER.

NOW, KEN!

DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

AWW. BUT MOM, YOU TOLD ME IT'S BAD TO LIE OR BEND THE TRUTH.

I MEANT IN AN IDEAL WORLD!

RUMBLE

CLANK

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

HNNNGH

I'M NOT SCARED AT ALL!

SHAKE

SHAKE

SHAKE

...I'M NOT SCARED.

OH?

WHOA, THIS IS AWE-SOME.

LOOK AROUND, SAKURAI.

WOW...

THEIR SOULS...

IT'S LIKE ...

...THEY'RE SLIPPING OUT.

LIKE MAYBE THEY'RE ALL PREPARED TO DIE.

...OH.

MAYBE THEIR SOULS ARE STARTING TO GIVE THEIR PERMISSIONS ...

WHEN YOU LOOK AT IT THAT WAY, IT MAKES SENSE THAT THE GUY WHOSE SOUL IS STICKING OUT THE FARTHEST IS ALSO THE ONE WHO'S MOST FREAKED OUT.

POINT

HUH?







SIGNS: Naha Airport, Domestic Flights



歓迎 WELCOME 迎

Mensore TO OKINAWA

出口 2 EXIT

OKINAWA SURE IS HOT.

PIB

どったり… EXHAUSTED

...IT FEELS SO... RIGHT.

...BUT THE AIR SWIRLING AROUND ME...

MY PAST IS HERE.

I HAVE TO FIND IT.

...AMANO-KUN IS SERIOUS.

BUT THE TRUTH IS... I'M HERE ON ORDERS FROM TOKIEDA-SAN TO STOP HIM.

ANYWHERE IN MIND?

SO... WHERE ARE WE GOING ?

...

RUSTLE

THE ONLY GUIDE YOU'LL NEED

Tropical Sweets

Okinawa

BEST BEACH RESORTS

AQUARIUMS

Hai-saaai!

...HUH?

SIGN: Land of Propriety

WATER BUFFALO CART

SIGN: Himeyuri

ENTRANCE
NEAPPLE PARK

TASAYAMA
HABU CENTER

SULK

...

I'M NOT REMEM-BERING ANYTHING, THOUGH ...

HA HA!

OH MAN, I LOVE OKINAWA!

...IS THIS WHAT YOU CALL "ANXIETY"?

BUT I'M NOT GETTING ANY REAL MEMO-RIES.

...THE COLOR OF THE FLOWERS, OR THE SMELL OF THE AIR, THAT GETS UNDER MY SKIN.

THERE'S SOME-THING ABOUT ...

SIGN: Okinawa Soki Soba Asahi

WHAT'S THAT?

MAYBE WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH IS SOMETHING LIKE AN IDENTITY CRISIS.

WELL...

...WHAT DO YOU KNOW.

MAYBE WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT DISPOSING OF HIM AFTER ALL.

THEY SAY IT HAPPENS IN ADOLESCENCE WHEN YOUR HORMONE BALANCE GOES OUT OF SYNC WITH THE GROWTH RATE OF YOUR BRAIN.

IT COULD ALSO BE ANOTHER INSTANCE OF SOUL SHIFTING, THOUGH.

IT'S SOME-THING ALL HUMANS GO THROUGH.

IT'S WHEN A PERSON LOSES SENSE OF WHO THEY ARE AND BECOMES ANXIOUS BECAUSE OF IT.

BUT ONCE WE GET CAUGHT UP WITH WORK OR WITH ANY OF THE OTHER IMMEDIATE REALITIES IN FRONT OF US, WE TEND TO FORGET ALL ABOUT IT.

YOU JUST NEED TO GET BACK TO WORK, AMANO-KUN, AND I'M SURE...

AND HOW ABOUT THAT? TOKIEDA-SAN ACTUALLY GAVE ME SOME RETURN TICKETS ALREADY.

IF YOU'RE NOT REMEM-BERING ANYTHING, WE SHOULD JUST GO HOME.

IS THAT NORMAL?

EVERYONE JUST GIVES UP ON TRYING TO FIND THEM-SELVES?

THEY FORGET THEM-SELVES? AND THAT'S OKAY?

IS THAT NORMAL FOR HUMANS WHO HAVE SOULS?

...

MAYBE I WASN'T TAKING THIS TRIP SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.

AMANO-KUN IS PREPARED FOR WHATEVER COMES.

A RESOLVE... THAT MOST PEOPLE JUST FORGET.

HE HAS THE RESOLVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HE IS, WITHOUT HIDING FROM ANY UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS.

P1B

...WHAT ABOUT ME?

SO...

HUH?

WAIT! AMANO-KUN?!

SHUT

STOP THE CAR!

I'M GETTING OUT!

SKREE

!

KI NO KO

STAIRS PA
THIS POIN

I...

I AM NOT. I WENT TO THE BATH-ROOM...

WINCE

YOU HAD YOUR PARENTS WITH YOU BEFORE.

YOU LOST?

HYAH HAH!

LOSER!

OH.

THAT'S THE BOY FROM THE AIR-PORT.

AND MY PHONE'S OUT OF POWER BECAUSE I PLAYED TOO MANY GAMES ON IT.

SO...

...AND WHEN I GOT BACK...

...THEY WERE GONE.

yeah, yeah.

I'LL HELP YOU FIND THEM.

TUG

I'M NOT LOST...

SO YOU'RE LOST.

...KEN-KUN.

KEN SAITÓ

HEEY!

KEN'S PARENTS! WHERE ARE YOU?!

PTB

HEEEY! HE'S LOST HERE!

HIS NAME'S KEN SAITO!

WHERE'D YOU GO, PARENTS?!

I HAVE KEN!

KEN'S RIGHT OVER HERE !!

...M...

MOM! DAD!

WHERE ARE YOU ?!!

I'M...

...RIGHT HERE...

I'M RIGHT HERE !!





HEY.

WHY DO I SEE ALL THOSE WEIRD THINGS?

I KNOW YOU KNOW! TELL ME!

WHAT AM I?

I'M SCARED!

I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHO I AM! I'M SCARED!

I WENT THROUGH IT TOO.

EVERY-BODY DOES.

...I SHOULD NEVER HAVE FORGOT-TEN.

RIP

OKINAWA

11:36

RUSTLE

I'm tired.

SORRY THAT TOOK SO LONG, SAKURAI.

全空 ANL PASSEN

OKINAWA

11:36

¥19800

0226

...NO, I'M SORRY I TOOK SO LONG.

AMANO-KUN,

WE'RE GOING TO FIND YOUR ROOTS... YOUR FAMILY.

I KNOW IT'S A LITTLE LATE, BUT I'M READY NOW. I FOUND MY RESOLVE.

...

UH, THANKS ?

...WHY DON'T WE GET *THEM* TO COME TO US?

I HAVE AN IDEA.

IF YOU CAN'T FIND ANY CLUES, LIKE MEMORIES OR PEOPLE YOU KNOW...

SIGNS (R TO L):
Taco Rice
Gift Shop
Chili Spice
Okinawa Ramen

A STREET SHOW?

murmur

HUH?

WHAT'S THAT?

murmur

WHOA...

SIGN: Okinawa Awamori

murmur

murmur

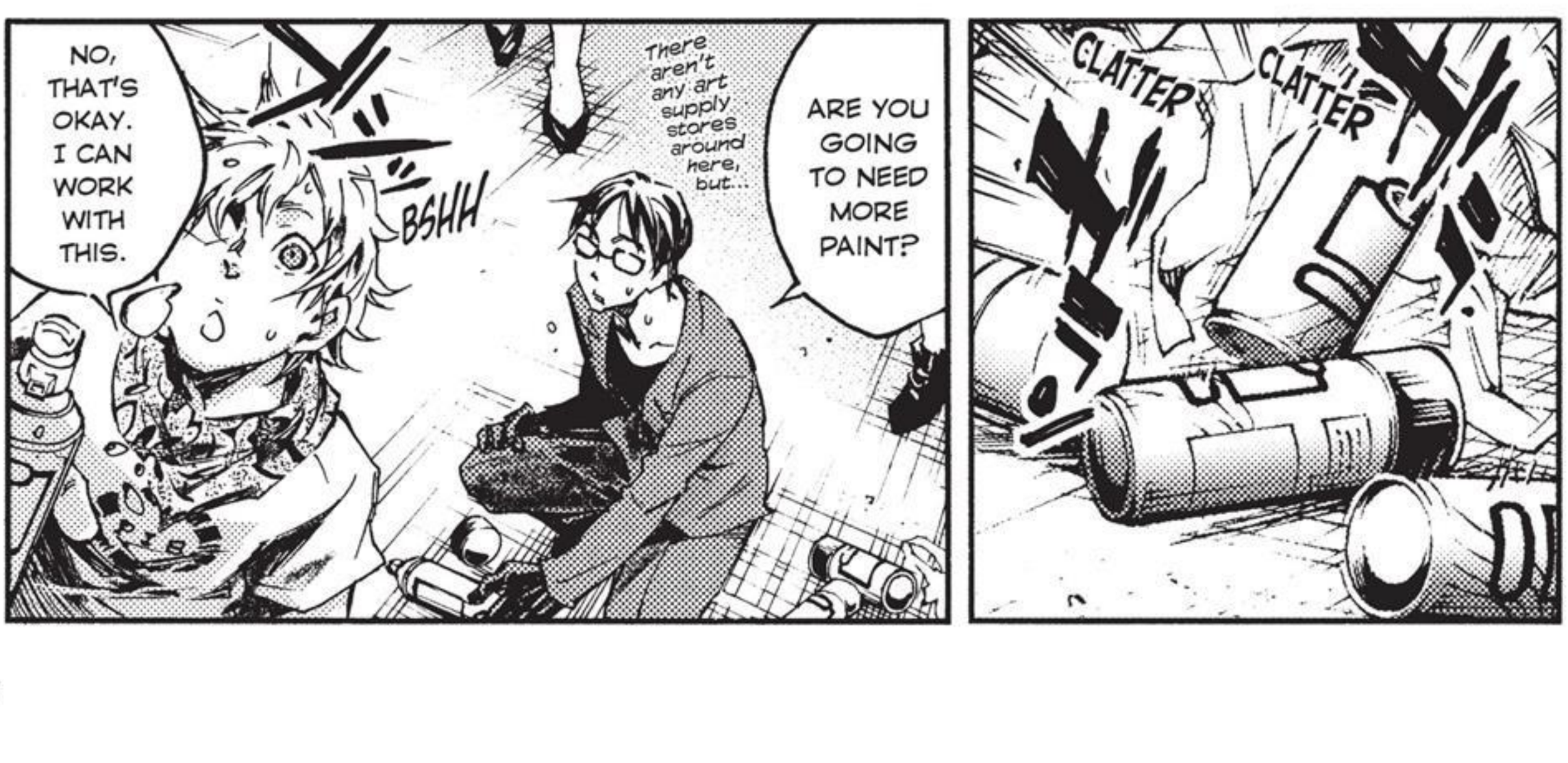
SIGNS: Okinawa Shiisaa, Gift Shop

BAM

THIS PIC'S GOING ONLINE.

WHOA, THAT MURAL IS AWESOME!




NO, THAT'S OKAY. I CAN WORK WITH THIS.
BSHH
There aren't any art supply stores around here, but...
ARE YOU GOING TO NEED MORE PAINT?
CLATTER
CLATTER

HEY...

murmur

murmur

murmur

I'VE SEEN THAT PIECE SOMEWHERE BEFORE.

HEY, I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING!

OH, YEAH... WASN'T IT AT SOME EVENT WAY BACK WHEN?

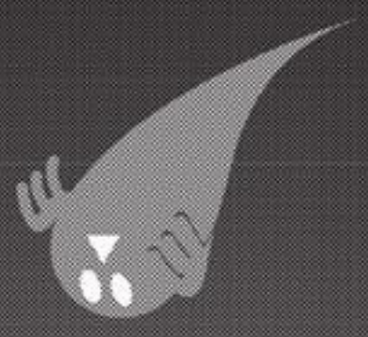
...YOU'RE KIDDING ME.

HUH...

BUT THAT PIECE ...

M...

MAKOTO ...?!



Chapter 19 Memory's Fuse

YOU'RE KIDDING ME...

THIS PIECE ...

1DAY KATT

さつまいも

SIGNS: Gifts, sweet potatoes

MAKOTO... IS THAT YOU?!

DID HE KNOW AMANO-KUN BEFORE HE BECAME A CLEANER?

...!


APAL

JAF

HEY.

TAP

LONG TIME NO SEE, *SOGATCHI!*

P.I.B

SO IF WE TALK TO THIS "SOGA" PERSON, WE SHOULD GET MORE...

HIC...

STAGGER

IN-CRED-IBLE ...

HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY MEMORY DATA FROM HIS OLD SOUL... THE MEMORIES OF THE FLESH ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN I THOUGHT.

NO, JUST A BROKEN IMAGE.

Hmm?

WHAT ?!

YOU GOT YOUR MEMO-RIES BACK ?

...EEP!

AAAHH!!

DASH

AAAAAW

BAM

PLEASE, STOP! WE NEED TO TALK TO...

JUST A...

NO! WE FINALLY FOUND A CLUE TO AMANO-KUN'S PAST!

HUH ?

HUH ?

SO-GATCHI ?

THE TARGET IS ON THE MOVE.

HMPH.

THE IDIOT'S DONE IT NOW.

CLINK

HE'S LIT THE FUSE TO A BOMB.

WHEEZE
LET'S SEE...

WHEEZE
HE SURE IS FAST!

WHEEZE

HUFF!

HUFF!

WHEEZE
KŌTARŌ SOGA, AGE 20...

KŌTARŌ SOGA

WE WOULD ALWAYS COME TO THIS PARK AND LISTEN TO HIP-HOP CDS...

...AND HE'D LOAN ME HIS SKATEBOARD AND THINGS.

WHEEZE
AT-TENDED NAHA SECOND SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL.

...HE DROP-PED OUT.

HE'S MY SENPAI.

HEY!

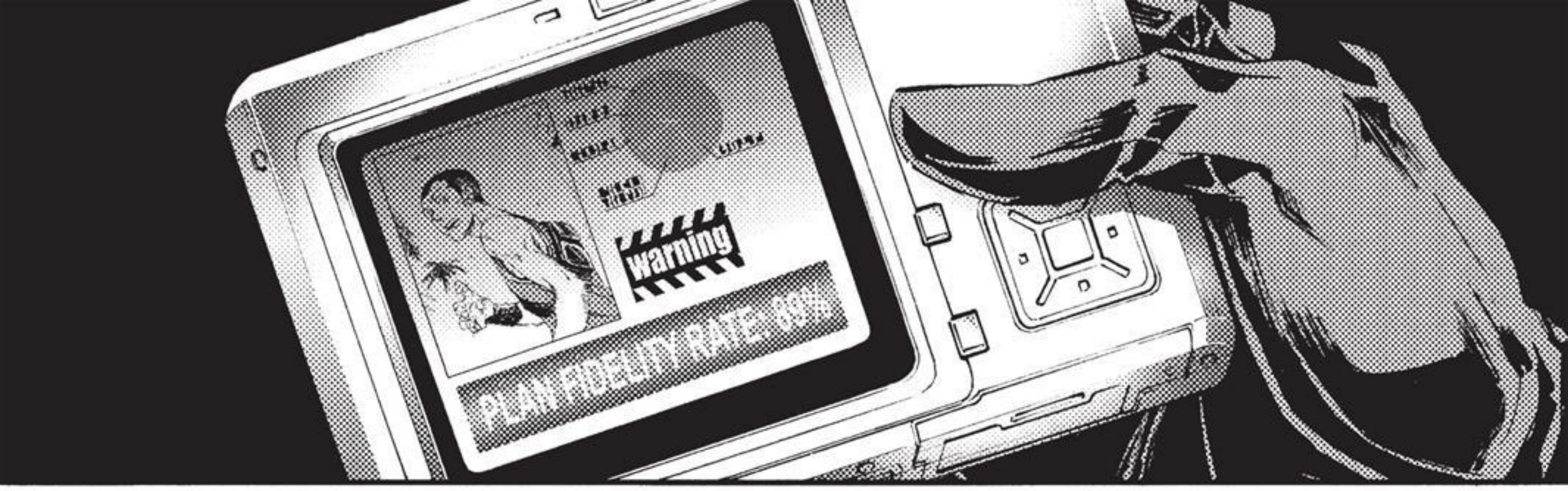
IT'S ME!

SOGATCHI! WAIT!

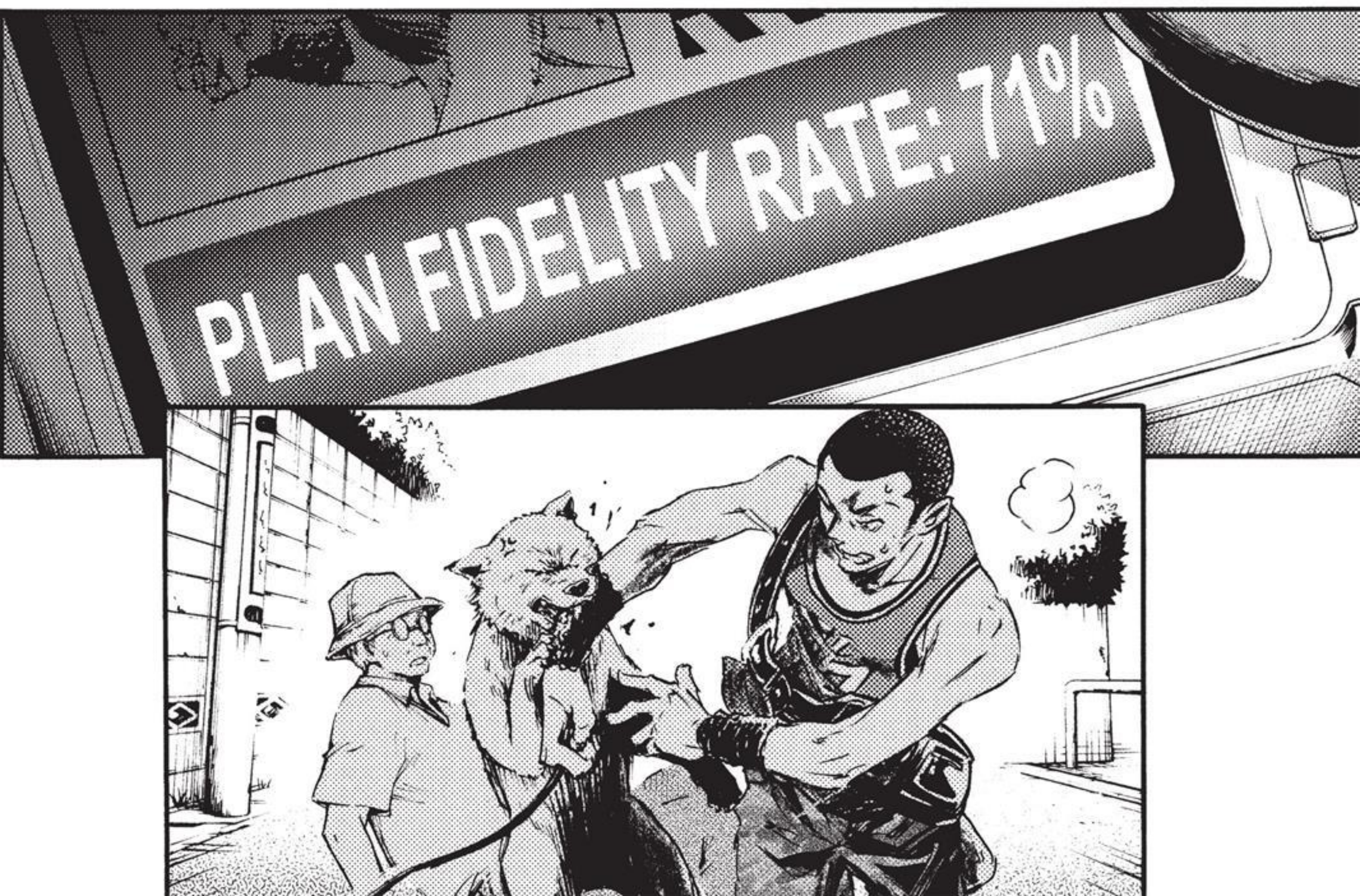
?!

BEEP

BEEP BEEP

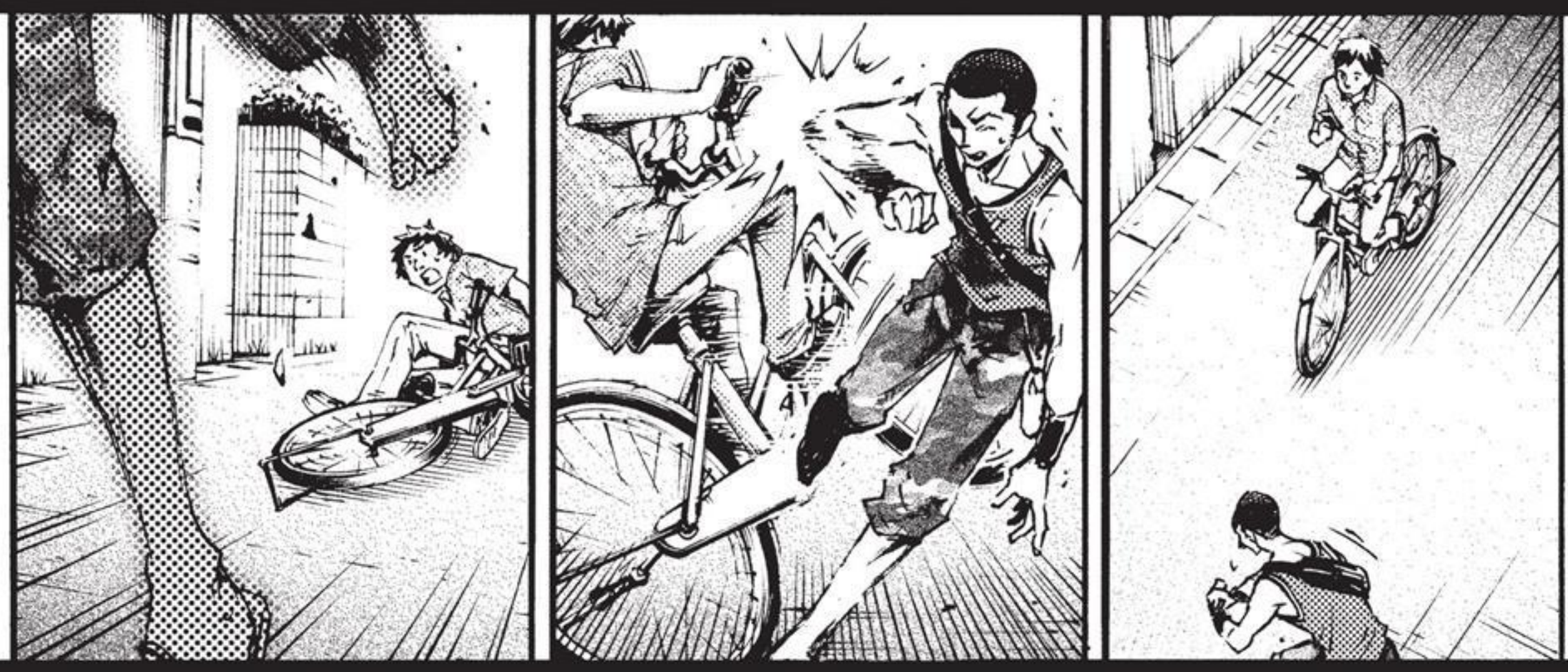

warning
PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 69%


wobble
!
SNAP
WHAM

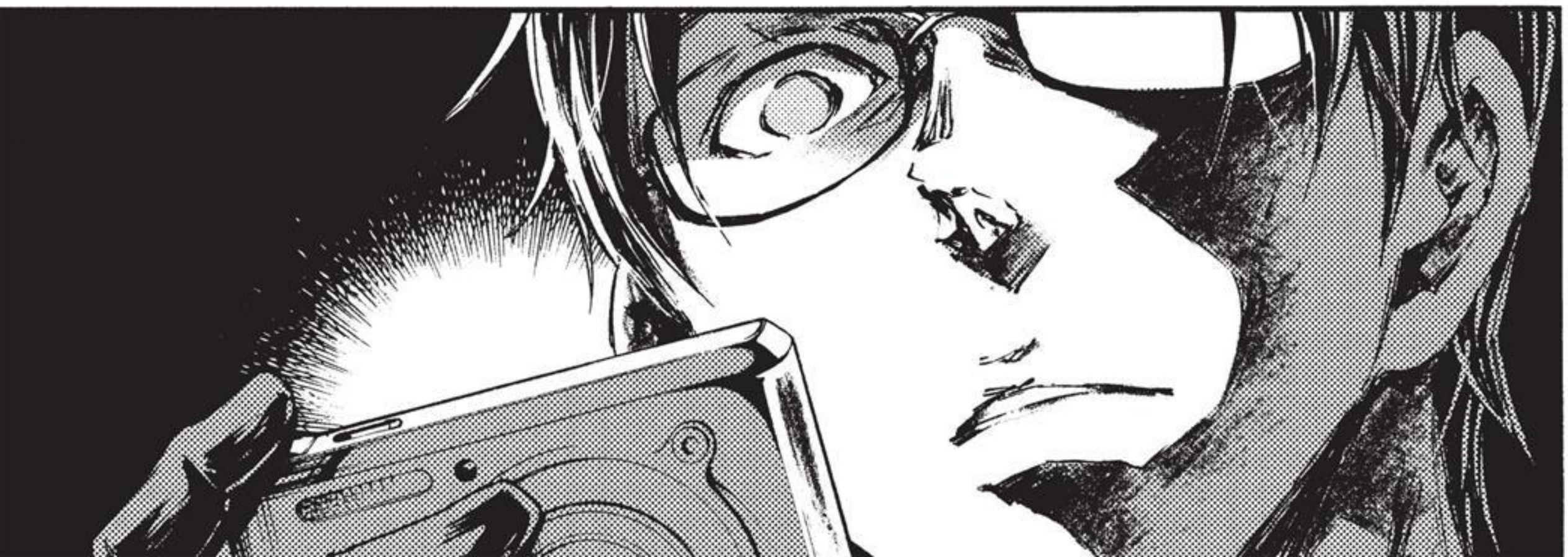

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 71%



PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 62%



PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 49%



...IS BREAKING APART ?!

...HIS...

...SOUL...

SOME-THING'S WRONG...! HIS PLAN FIDELITY RATE KEEPS DROPPING.

HE'S RUNNING INTO ONE MIS-FORTUNE AFTER ANOTHER ?!

SIGN: Flower Cupid

WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING?!

WHAT'S CAUSING IT?!

WHY?!

Warmly

PLAN FIDELITY RATE: 18%

"...THE KID'S..."

...A BOMB NOW."

SKREEE

CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!

GASP

EEEK!

ARE YOU OKAY, SOGATCHI?

BLEED!!

I'M FINE. I DON'T FEEL ANY PAIN.

...OH.

NOT ANY-MORE.

BY THE WAY...I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT MYSELF.

...WHAT THE HELL?

PIB

DUDE, YOU JUST GOT HIT BY A CAR...

...!

EEP!

BASH

WHACK

AM I LOSING MY MIND ?!

...WHAT THE HELL ?!

WHO *ARE* YOU ?!

ARE YOU A GHOST?! A ZOMBIE ?!

YOU'RE NOT MAKOTO !!

MAKOTO... MAKOTO'S...

MAKOTO'S GONE...

HE'S DEAD...

AH...

AUGH.

AH...

AGH...

IF YOU TOUCH HIM... YOU'LL MAKE IT WORSE.

...LOOK CLOSELY.

DON'T, AMANO-KUN.

...SO-GATCHI ?

YOU'RE A CLEANER— A SOULLESS PIECE OF FLESH WITH A SUBSTITUTE STONE INSIDE... I THINK YOU EXIST OUTSIDE OF "THE PLANS" AND THE LAWS OF NATURE. SO...

...TO THE PEOPLE WHO KNEW YOU BEFORE, YOU'RE...

YOU...

YOU'RE A BOMB.

...OH.

I SEE.

CLATTER...

BECAUSE I'M ALREADY DEAD.

...

RIGHT.

I'M...NOT SUPPOSED TO EXIST.

WEE-OO

WEE-OO

...WE CAN DO?

...NOTH-ING...

...AND THERE'S ...

murmur

BUT HE'S LONG PAST ANY HOPE OF RECOVERY ...

murmur

murmur

WE HAVE TO...

...STOP DERAILING HIS PLAN.

WEE-OO

NEAR THE INTER-SECTION AT 3-CHOME, NUMBER—

WEE-OO

SKRK

WHAT THE ?!

HUH?

THE BOY WHO GOT HIT IS BLEEDING, BUT STILL ON HIS FEET.

THE OTHER YOUNG MAN WHO WAS WITH HIM HAS FAINTED...

WEE-OO

WEE-OO

?!

...?!...

WHOOSH

SKRRRRKK

SKRRK

?!

SLAM

CLACK!

WE'LL HAVE TO USE NON-STANDARD PROCE-DURES.

SKIP PROTOCOL.

HE HAS A PULSE.

THE AMBULANCE WILL BE HERE IN FOUR MINUTES, 18 SECONDS.

...NGH...

ptts

TWITCH

NOW UN-LOCK-ING.

FLIP FLIP FLIP

FLIP

はら？

FLIP

はら？

A BOOK ...?!

SHE VISUALIZED HIS SOUL DATA?!

PEELING TEXT: Makoto/Makoto Momose

...MAKOTO...

...MOMOSE...

FIP

FIP

FIP

THERE.

CLAP

DELETE!

FWOOM

HM?

I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING BIG JUST HAPPENED ...

?

WHY'D I GET OUT OF MY CAR?

HUH ?

murmur

?

JUDGING BY THE SPARKS THAT FLEW OVER THE SURROUNDING AREA, I BELIEVE WE HAVE MANAGED TO ERASE ALL OF THE AFFLICTED MEMORIES OF THE DECEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

murmur

DELETION COMPLETE.

ZZZ...

ZZZ...

I MEAN ...

WE ARE IN OKINAWA, AREN'T WE?

SO WHY ARE YOU HERE ?

...

UMMM ...

MAY I SPEAK NOW?

AS FOR THE KID WITH THE BUZZ CUT'S SOUL PLAN...

...GOOD. I THINK WE CAN RESTORE IT.


DU-
DUN
...EBINA-SAN?


HUH ?
TO SEE THE SIGHTS.

AND WE *HAPPENED* TO FIND A COUPLE OF LOSERS CAUSING THE SORT OF ACCIDENT THAT NO SELF-RESPECTING CLEANER WOULD ALLOW TO HAPPEN.

WE *HAPPENED* TO DRIVE BY WHILE WE WERE HERE ON VACATION.

IS THERE A PROBLEM ?

NO... THAT'S TOO MUCH OF A COINCI-DENCE.

THAT'S RIGHT, MA'AM.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT, NAGISA ?

AND WE *HAPPENED* TO COME BY AND DO THEM THE FAVOR OF REMEDYING THE SITUATION FLAWLESSLY AND EXPEDI-TIOUSLY.

KA-

POW

YANK

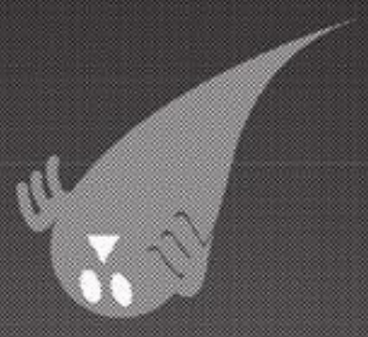
GRAB

IN OTHER WORDS ...!

ACK!

SLAM!

I AM WELL WITHIN MY RIGHTS TO GIVE YOU A LONG, STERN TALKING-TO, WHICH I BELIEVE YOU BOTH NEED.



Chapter 20 Second Death



SO.

THE SOUL CYCLE IS A CRITICAL LAW OF THIS WORLD'S NATURE THAT MUST NEVER BE OPPOSED, AND YOU HAVE REVEALED YOURSELF TO BE SUCH A COMPLETE IMBECILE THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN COMPREHEND THAT IT IS OUR JOB TO PROTECT, MONITOR, MA AND ASSIST THAT ALTHOUGH I MIGH EXPECTED AS M SOMEONE WITH YO DORKY GLASSES WRINKLED SU SCRUFFY H

I ALWAYS WERE NATURA BUT I DIDN WERE SO S WOULD TRY TOOL'S ROOTS" AND GO SO FAR BEYOND THE TERRITORY OF THE B THAT REA EFFECT HE

SURELY YOU HAVE *SOME* IDEA OF HOW FOOLISH YOU ACTIONS HAVE BEE AND HOW YOU HA SHOWN A COMPLE AND UTTER LACK WARENESS TH E A CLEANER HAVE NO OU ARE WITH NO

SAKURAI, WAS IT?

IS CTL S H ENED U ENDED BING AN INNO ILIAN INTO YOU MS AND THROWIN AIS SOUL'S PLAN COM- PLETELY OFF COURSE, AND AFTER ALL THAT, YOU SHOWER EVERYTHIN IN STAINBEASTS, WHICH LED TO NO LESS THAN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, SN'T THAT RIGHT? D OU UNDERSTAN ME?

SO, MORON, I'VE JUST ABOUT FORGOTTEN YOUR NAME BY NOW, AND I THINK I'LL CALL YOU SOMETHING LIKE "IDIOT," "DULLARD," "BLOCKHEAD," "NUMBSKULL", OR "INCOMPETENT COCKROACH." I'M SURE YOU HAVE NO OBJECTIONS, DO YOU?

SO YOU SHOULD TRY SHOWING AN OUNCE OF PENITENCE! EVEN A MONKEY CAN DO THAT. I'D HAVE YOU SPIN AROUND THREE TIMES WHILE OINKING, BUT THAT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO THE ANIMAL KINGDOM, BECAUSE YOUR POWERS OF JUDGMENT ARE LESS THAN THOSE OF AN ANIMAL.

HAD THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS MIGHT HAPPEN EVEN OCCURRED TO YOU FOR AN INSTANT?! IF WE HADN'T HAPPENED TO ARRIVE ON THE SCENE, YOU WOULD HAVE BECOME THE FURTHEST THING FROM A "MANAGER" OF SOULS, YOU'D HAVE BEEN A "DESTROYER" OF THEM.

...UM.

...

STING

STING

WE USED A NON-STANDARD PROCE-DURE.

IT'S HOW SOME OF THE MORE CORRUPT PSYCHOLITH MANAGERS DO THINGS.

CLATTER

AND I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT... BUT I APPRECIATE THAT YOU HANDLED THE SITUA-TION.

...I AM TRULY, SINCERELY SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO SOGA-KUN.

BY ERASING THE HARMFUL MEMORIES— ANYTHING RELATED TO MAKOTO MOMOSE— WE FORCED HIS SOUL'S PLAN BACK ON TRACK.

WE SEND THE HUMAN (SOGA) INTO A SEMI-COMPULSORY HYPNOTIC STATE AND SHAVE THE MEMORY DATA FROM HIS PSYCHOLITH.

5.09.21

KŌTARŌ SOGA

CON-SIDER WHO FORCED MY HAND IN THE MATTER, YOU FOUR-EYED IDIOT!

AAA

GYA

RA

AA

RAA

DO YOU THINK I *WANTED* TO ?!

...!

UNBE-LIEV-ABLE ...

YOU CAN MANIPULATE PEOPLE'S MEMORIES? BUT THAT'S—

HRNGH ?!

BAM

TUP.. sff

...MM.

THAT'S MY NAGISA. SO CON-SIDERATE.

MA'AM.

YOU'VE BEEN TALKING FOR ONE HOUR AND 52 MINUTES. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE THIRSTY.

HAVE SOME WATER.

YOU MAY HAVE SOME, TOO, FOUR-EYED, INCOMPETENT COCKROACH-SAMA.

SIGH

UH...

THANK YOU VERY MUCH ...

...BUT WHY...

...DID YOU COME TO OKINAWA ?

SURELY THIS ISN'T *JUST* A COINCI-DENCE.

...

...TOKIEDA-SAN SENT YOU, DIDN'T HE?

...I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU AND TOKIEDA-SAN ARE TELLING ME. I REALLY DO.

BUT NEITHER OF YOU UNDER-STAND.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW AMANO-KUN FEELS. HE HAS A NEED TO KNOW HIMSELF.

HE'S... A CHILD.

HE'S CRYING, "I'M RIGHT HERE."

HE'S WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME FIND HIM.

EBINA-SAN IS LUCKY.

YOUR PARTNER. SHE'S YOUR SISTER, RIGHT?

YOU'RE HER FAMILY AND KNOW HER PAST... SO SHE WOULDN'T HAVE THAT ANXIETY.

IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW ANXIOUS IT'S MAKING HIM...NOT HAVING A PLACE TO BELONG...

WHOA ?!

?!

KAPOW

FLING

BAM

WHOOSH

FLING

HUH ?!

JUST A—

WHACK

WHAM

GRPH!

CLANG

OWWW!

KLONG

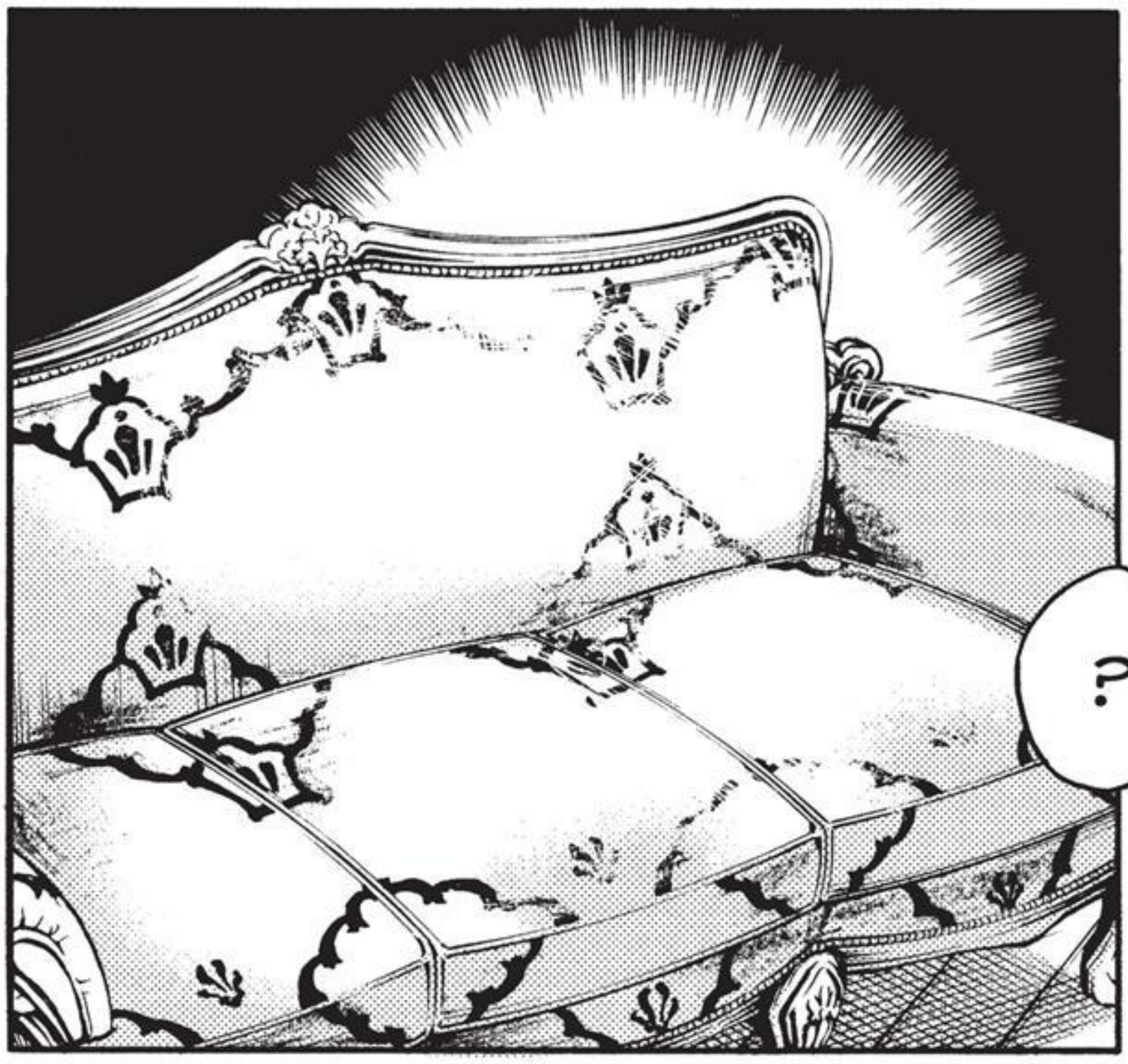
fsh

fsh

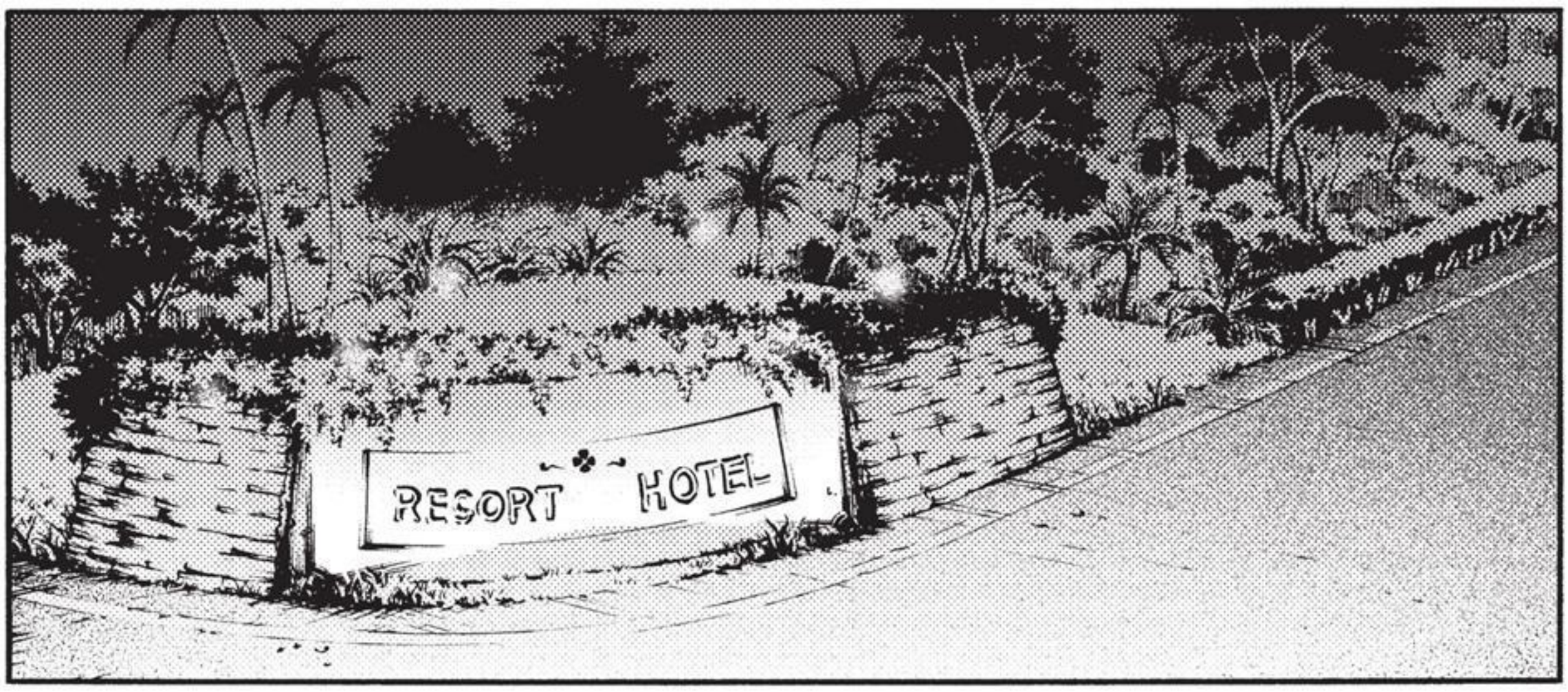
fsh

WAI—

WHAM




FWAM
?
WHAP


RESORT HOTEL



!

YOU HAVE BEEN FORBIDDEN FROM ACTING OUTSIDE OUR RANGE OF SUPER-VISION.

YEAH, BUT... THAT ROOM WAS JUST SO SMALL.

?

THE SUITE IS A 40-MAT* ROOM.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

*711.7 square feet

IT IS A PREREQUISITE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CLEANING OF PSYCHOLITHS MUST FIRST HAVE DIED AND LOST THEIR SOUL...

...AND TO THEN RECEIVE A SUBSTI-TUTE STONE IN ORDER TO ACT AS A PSEUDO-HUMAN.

...HEY. YOU'RE LIKE ME, RIGHT?

...YOU'RE DEAD.

YOUR ANALOGY IS NOT ENTIRELY ACCURATE, BUT YES.

THAT'S WHAT WE ARE, RIGHT?

YEAH.

I HEARD THAT YOU CAN MAKE A DEAD FROG MOVE BY RUNNING ELECTRICITY THROUGH IT.

SO HOW ARE WE DEAD?

DO OUR JOB.

THINK.

SLEEP.

WE EAT.

...YOU DON'T THINK ANY-THING OF IT?

HOW ARE WE DIFFER-ENT ...

...FROM ANYBODY WHO'S ALIVE?

MAKOTO...

...IS GONE. HE'S DEAD.

...YOU'RE ALWAYS WITH SOMEONE FROM YOUR OLD FAMILY.

DON'T YOU THINK ABOUT THAT STUFF?

SHE'S YOUR SISTER, RIGHT?

YOUR TWIN.

THAT WOMAN...

THAT TOOL...

...IS

NO FAMILY OF MINE.

NOT FAMILY.

GRAB

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?!

SHE'S JUST...

...SHE'S A TOOL.

...A MOVING CORPSE!

CRASH

CHUG

...

...THAT'S NOT TRUE.

THAT'S HOW THEY LOSE ALL THEIR USEFUL-NESS!

BUT YOU—YOU JUST *HAVE* TO KEEP BEING ALL EMOTIONAL WITH THEM!

THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM RE-SPOND WITH SOMETHING LIKE EMOTIONS OF THEIR OWN!

THROUGH HIS WORK...

...HE'S BECOMING HUMAN!

AMANO-KUN HAS *LEARNED!* HE'S GROWN!

LIKE A BABY!

...TO STUNT HIS GROWTH ?!

BUT WHAT RIGHT DO I HAVE...

I DON'T WANT TO DISPOSE OF HIM EITHER!

THAT'S OKAY

HE GOT TO SEE HIS FAMILY BEFORE HE DIED

THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU, RIGHT

AMANO-KUN'S BODY DOESN'T LAUGH OR CRY.

BUT TO ME...

HE'S NOT A CORPSE OR A TOOL— HE'S MY PARTNER!

GLUG GLUG

...

...THAT'S THE THING ABOUT YOU...

GRPH!

CLANG

CRASH

...

...

BOOM

SHATTER

...THAT I HAVE NEVER, EVER LIKED!

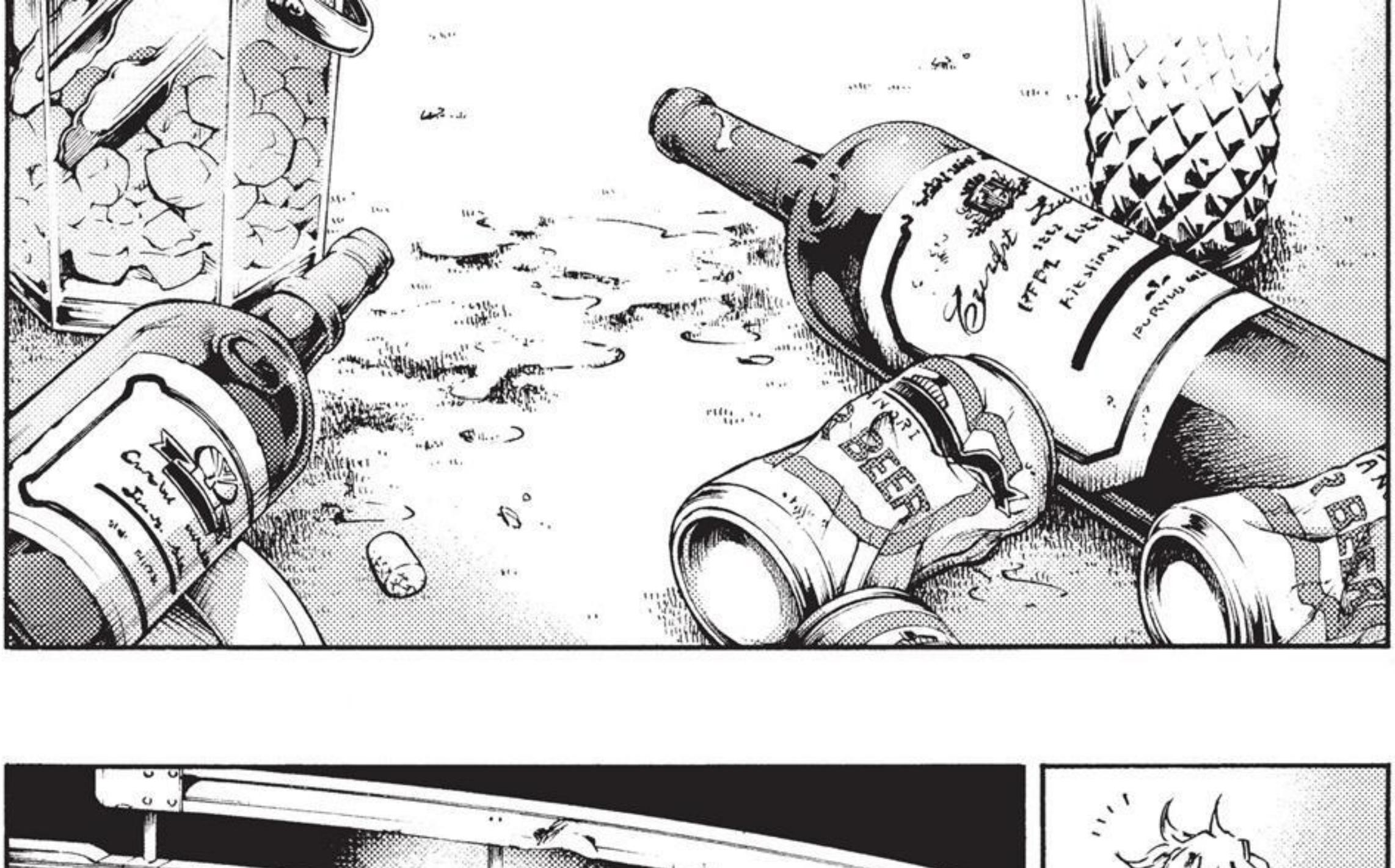
SNAP

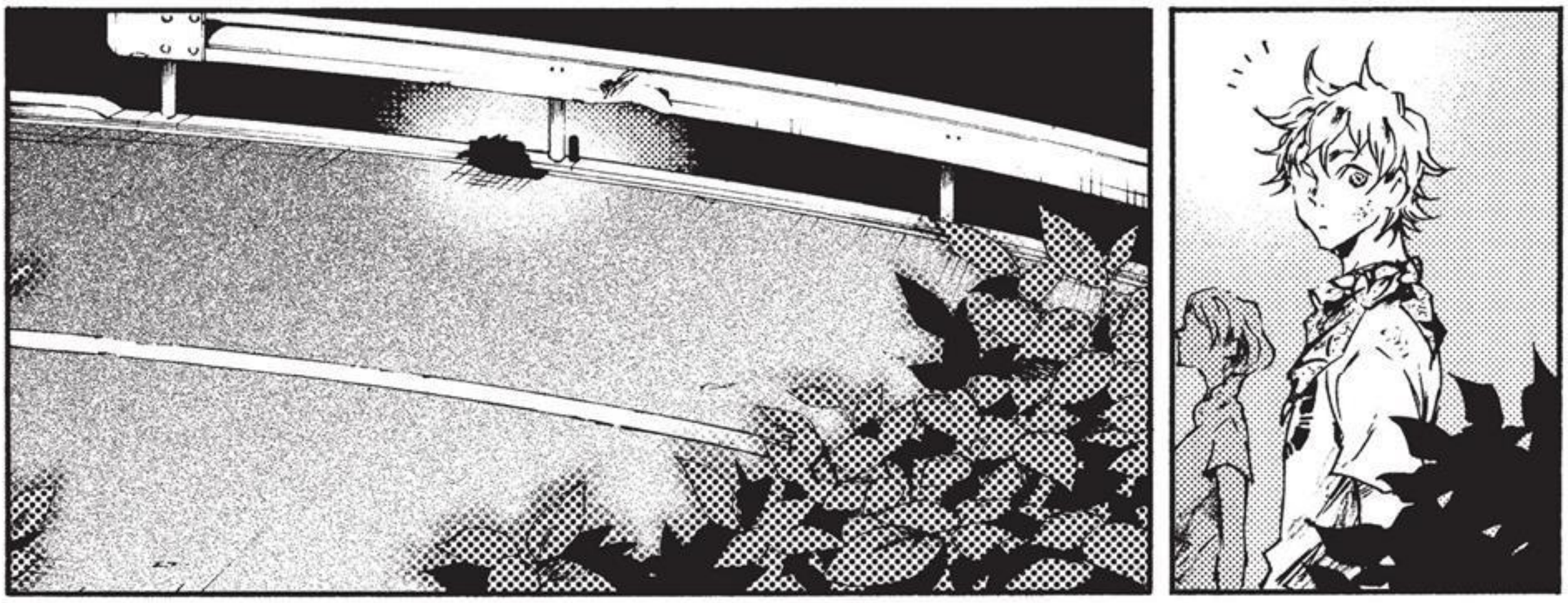
...

THEY'RE MAKING AN AWFUL LOT OF NOISE UP THERE. ARE THEY GONNA BE OKAY?

WHO CAN SAY?

I WONDER WHAT IT COULD BE ABOUT?


BEER




ACC
Coffe


...SO
EVEN WIDE
ROADS LIKE
THIS HAVE
ACCIDENTS.

パキン
SNAP
IT IS BEST TO CLEAN THEM UP.
THERE ARE QUITE A FEW STAIN-BEASTS, AS WELL.
YES.
BWAH
!

SCRUNCH

SOME-ONE PUT THOSE THERE ...

HEY, THAT'S ...

?

PSHHH

ARE THOSE FLOWERS FOR ONE OF THOSE "MEMORIAL" THINGS?

YOU DON'T NEED THAT.

...IS THERE SOME SIGNIFICANCE TO THOSE FLOWERS ?

I...

I'VE...

...CHANGED.

...NO.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHAT AM I TURNING INTO?

UNLIKE YOU...

...I HAVE SOME SELF-CONTROL!

WHAT?

I WISH ...!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

WHY DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?!

HOW CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF HUMAN?!

I WISH I COULD HEAR HER CALL ME "BIG SIS" AGAIN!

I WANT TO SEE HER SMILE!

I WANT TO PAT HER ON THE HEAD!

BUT IF I DID THAT, NAGISA WOULD START TO GO AGAINST THE LAWS OF NATURE. ...SHE WOULD STOP BEING MY TOOL.

SHE WOULD DIE AGAIN!

SO I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SEE HER AS LONG AS I CAN!

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO HEAR HER VOICE, EVEN IF THERE'S NOTHING OF HER IN IT!

SO I HOLD MYSELF BACK...

WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD WANT TO MAKE HER OWN SISTER DIE AGAIN ?!

YOU FOUR-EYED IDIOT !!

I'M...

I'M SORRY ...

KA-CHAK

WHOA.

...WHAT HAPPENED HERE? DID YOU SET A TIGER LOOSE IN THE ROOM?

MA'AM ?

...

LET HER SLEEP.

YOU BOTH MAY REST IN THAT VICINITY, AS WELL.

...YES, SIR.

SHE DOES APPEAR TO BE TIRED.

TKKA
TKKA
TKKA
BEEP
ADDRESS
Okinawa-ken
Tamagusuku-gu
2-chome
CENTRAL LIBRARY
no.9841752168
BROWSE | EDIT | HISTORY
HOME SHOW ALL SEARCH MOST RECENT
Makoto Momose
AUTHORIZATION: LEVEL 5
YEAH.
IT WAS ON THE FLOOR.
...AND ISN'T THAT EBINA-SAN'S COMPUTER?
...WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO USE THE CENTRAL LIBRARY FOR PERSONAL REASONS.
WEREN'T YOU?
...WEREN'T YOU TIRED?

HUH.

I GUESS WE'RE IN SYNC.

...

I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO DISPOSE OF YOU.

ARE YOU STILL...

SO HEY, AMANO-KUN.

I'M GOING.

RATTLE

...OKAY.

THEN WE'RE IN THIS TOGE-THER.

I THOUGHT WE SHOULD HAVE THEM.

SHE SAID THEY WERE SOGA-KUN'S MEMORIES OF "MAKOTO MOMOSE."

WHAT'S THAT?

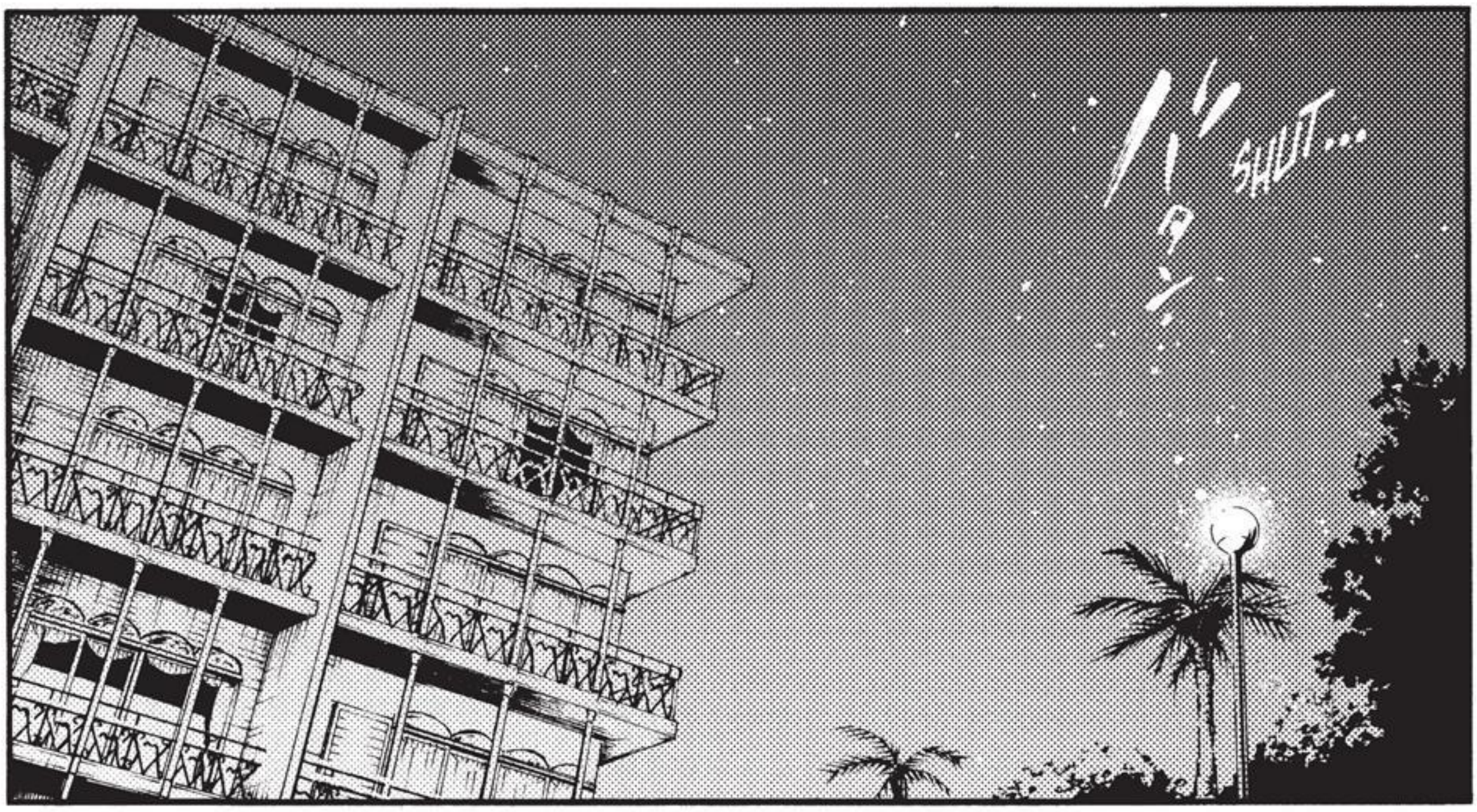
CREAK...

I GUESS MY PARTNER'S BEEN A BAD INFLUENCE.

ARE YOU SURE? THAT'S STEALING.

...THANK YOU, EBINA-SAN.

FOR WORRYING ABOUT US.


SHUT...


Access
Personal data
Handling level 5
Makoto Momose
Alert
to handling of information
BEEP
BEEP
User name

Search
TA
Tanaka
Toba Industries
Towada
NA
Nadzuka
Nasu
...
...THOSE STUPID IDIOTS.
THEY STOLE THE DATA.
BRRRING
RRRING
RRRING
HELLO ?
KA-CHAK

OH.

TOKIEDA-SAN... IT'S GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU.

NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I WAS AWAKE.

YES.

OH.

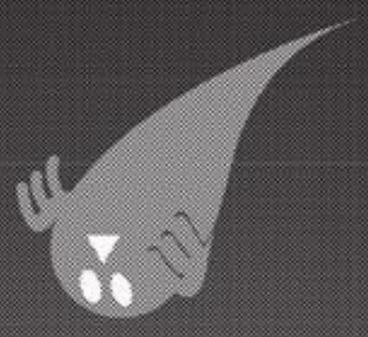
I SEE.

...I UNDER-STAND.

...WE'RE GOING TO LET MY SON— WE'RE GOING TO LET MAKOTO DIE AGAIN.



SIGN: **Momose**



Chapter 21 Two Realities

KA-CLANK

KA-CLUNK

KA-CLANK

KA-CLANK

KA-CLUNK

ISN'T IT A LITTLE EARLY TO BE HITCH-HIKING?

THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE OUT HERE, Y'KNOW?

WHERE'RE YOU FELLAS FROM ANYWAY ?

KA-CLANK

KA-CLUNK

KA-CLANK

UM... UH, TOKYO. WE'RE HERE ON VACA-TION.

I'M FROM AROUND HERE, MISTER.

I'M GOING BACK HOME.

CHEW

HEY.

KA-CLANK

THINGS'VE CHANGED AROUND HERE.

"MISTER" ?

...?

KA-CLUNK

I USED TO COME HERE ALL THE TIME TO CATCH THEM.

THERE ARE GIGANTIC GRASS-HOPPERS IN THIS FIELD.

THERE'S AN APARTMENT BUILDING.

Sugar Refinery
6 km ahead
-771-33

SKREE...

YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO WALK FROM HERE.

WELL, SEE YOU, BOYS.

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU REALLY KNOW THE AREA.

SEE YA.

OKAY.

WE'LL JUST FOLLOW THE FOOTPATH OUT TO THE HIGHWAY.

THAT RIVER THERE.

THERE'S LIKE A MILLION CRAYFISH IN THERE.

BUT THERE'S A TON OF MOS-QUITOES, TOO.

zsh

Hi!

...

...HEY, IS EVERY-THING OKAY?

HM?

DON'T WORRY. MOM SHOULD BE THERE.

SHE ALWAYS GETS UP EARLY.

JUST YESTERDAY, SHE WOKE UP AT FIVE TO CLEAN THE SHOP.

ARE HIS MEMO-RIES COMING BACK...

...AS WE GET CLOSER TO HIS HOME?

WAIT JUST ONE MINUTE.

...HUH?

IT'S FINE. JUST COME ON, SOGATCHI.

UH, I MEAN...

WAIT A MINUTE.

HEY...

...WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?

COME ON. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OH.

IT'S THE PLACE AT THE TOP OF THE HILL WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE OCEAN.

WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

THERE MIGHT BE SOME-THING I NEED TO KNOW ...

KA-POP

NOW'S MY CHANCE TO READ THE MEMORY DATA OF MAKOTO MOMOSE THAT EBINA-SAN TOOK FROM SOGA-KUN.

HUH ?

HUH ?

ER, UH... WAIT A MINUTE.

RUMMAGE

CLATTER

...!

HEY, LOOK!

THERE IT IS! UP THERE!

ZSHHH

THAT'S MY PLACE!

CUT HOUSE. Mimo

CUT HOUSE

Mo

Mo

SCRAK

SCRAK

SCHLK

SCHLK

"WHAT A WAY TO REPAY YOU... AFTER YOU PICKED UP MY WIFE'S PSYCHOLITH FOR ME."

"...I'M SO SORRY... TO DO THIS TO YOU, MOMOSE-SAN."

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, TOKIEDA-SAN."

"...THAT'S ALL RIGHT."

...

...

!

RATTLE

"MY SON... MAKOTO..."

JUST A...

HUH? UGH...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ?!

YOU'LL BREAK HER SOUL'S PLAN!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? YOU'RE A BOMB NOW!

YOU SHOULDN'T GO IN! LET'S JUST GET A GOOD LOOK AT IT FROM HERE AND GO HOME, OKAY?

WHO ARE YOU, ANYWAY ?!

LET GO OF ME!

WHAP!

MOM!

I'M HOME!

JANGLE

P1B

...

HOW CAN I HELP YOU ?

CREAK

KRSH

YOU'RE GONNA CUT MY HAIR?

OKAY.

CRUMP

HUH?

glance

...ARE YOU HERE FOR A HAIR-CUT ?

THUD

THAT REMINDS ME, I NEED MY ADDRESS BOOK.

HUH?

BUT I DON'T WANT A CREW CUT LIKE YOU GAVE HASHIMOTO-SENSEI.

WHERE'D I LEAVE MY BACKPACK ?

SIR?

SHALL I SHAMPOO YOUR HAIR?

...NO.

HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

YES, MA'AM.

...?

...?!

BEEP

L?

SNAP

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

PLAN FIDELITY RATE 92%

HER PLAN ISN'T CHANGING ...?

snip

snip

snip

...

snip

...I *AM* A BARBER.

...HEY, HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA PLAY BARBER?

WHAT'S...

...FOR LUNCH TODAY ?

...YEAH, BUT...

SNIP

WHY IS MY LUNCH ANY OF YOUR CONCERN ?

NO.

...IT'S ME.

MAKOTO.

HEY...

MOM...

MAKOTO DIED A YEAR AGO.

...IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

NO I DIDN'T.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? ...I MEAN, LOOK.

KA-THUNK

THAT PICTURE THERE. I DREW THAT.

I WANTED TO ADD JUST A LITTLE MORE.

CRASH

HERE. SEE? ON THIS BIRD...

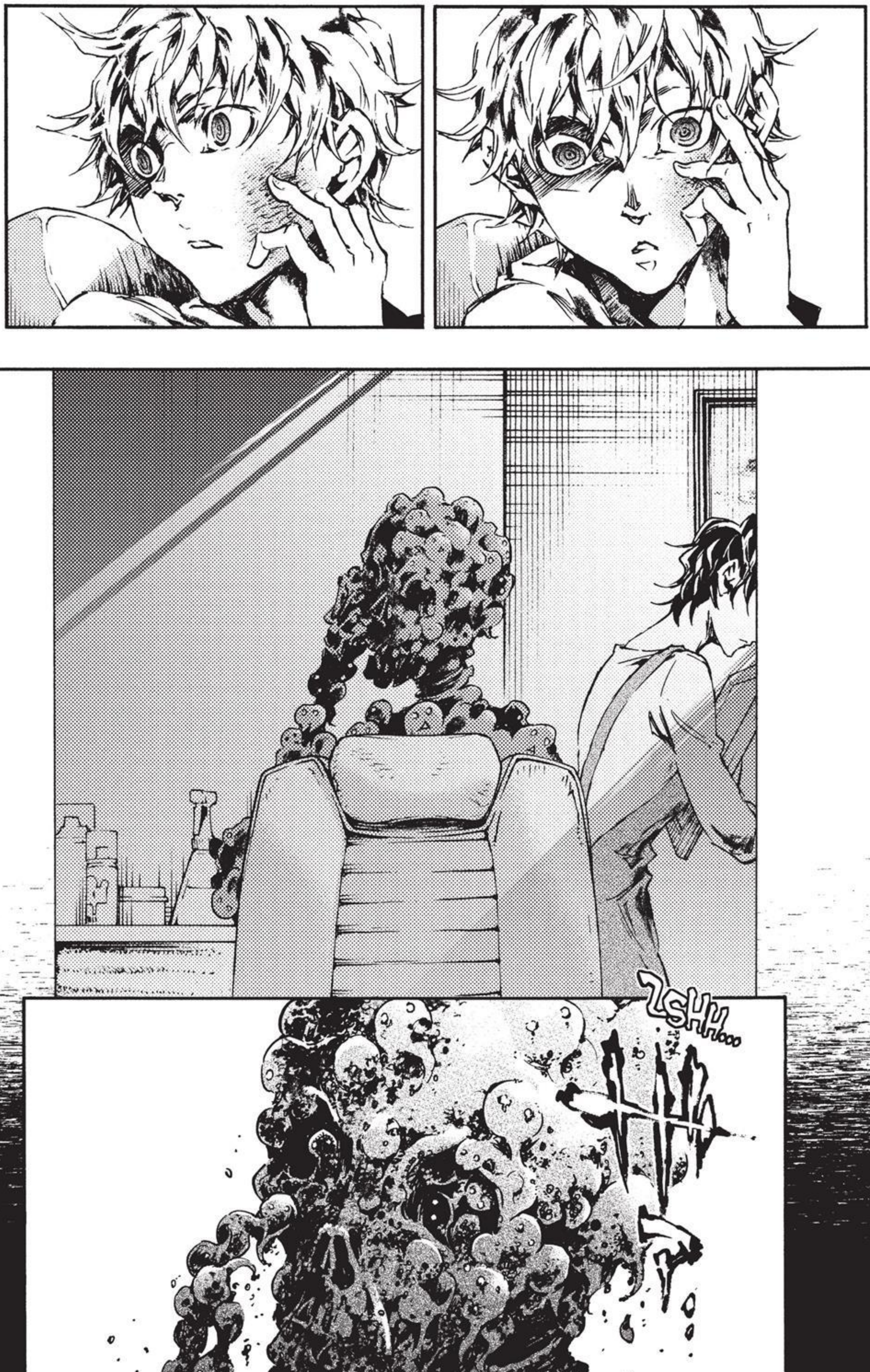
GRAB

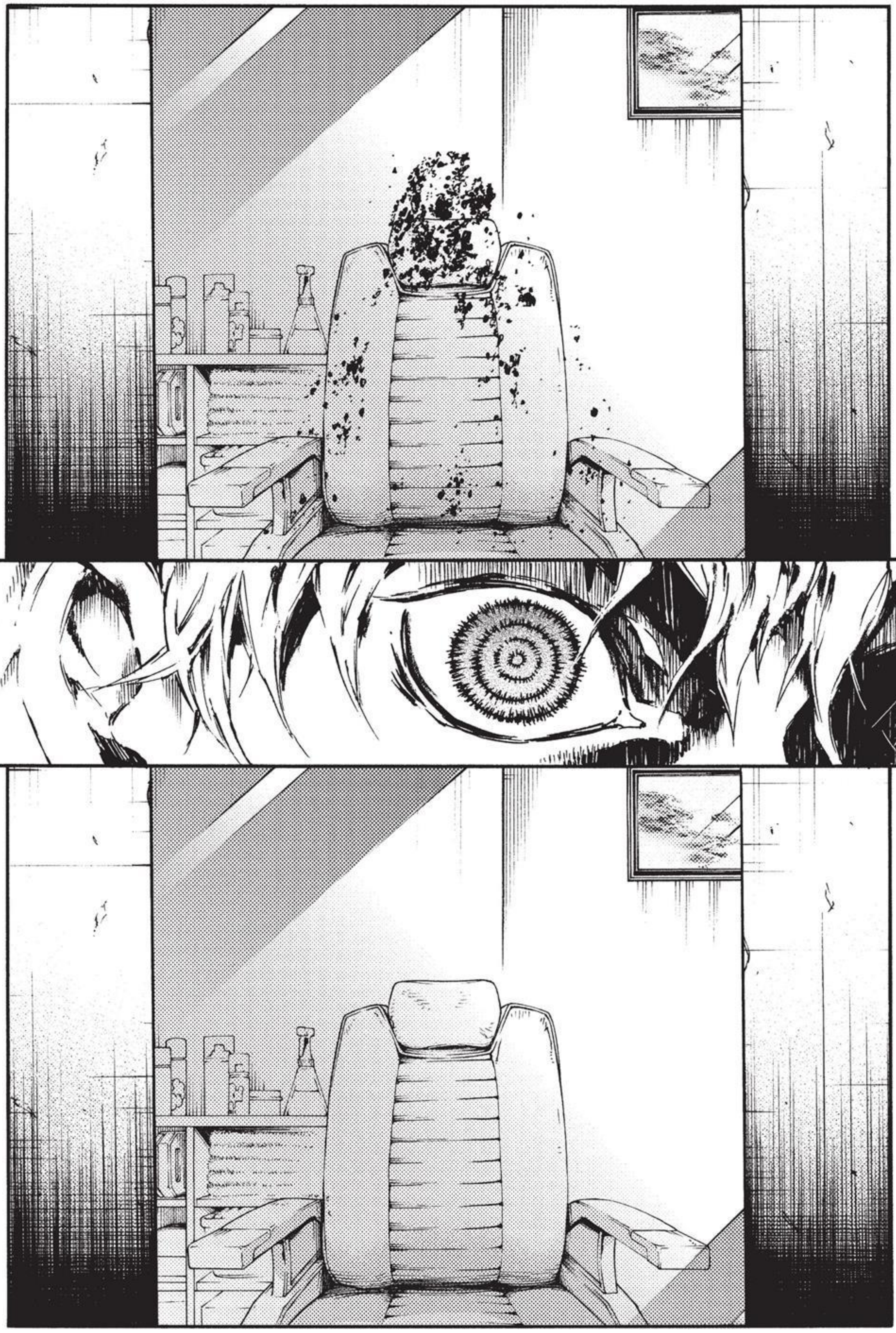
BUT I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH IT.

YEAH. I GOT AN AWARD FOR IT.


SLAP!

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
BUT DON'T TOUCH MAKOTO'S DRAWING.


ZSHHooo



YEAH...

SORRY.

I...

I MUST'VE BEEN CON-FUSED.

RUSTLE

KRSH...

...GOOD-BYE.

JANGLE

BUMP

OH.

AMANO-KUN...?

JANGLE

HELLO.

!

YOU MUST BE HIS PARTNER,

SAKURAI-SAN.

TOKIEDA-SAN TOLD ME ABOUT YOU.

WHAT?

...I USED TO BE IN THE BUSINESS.

YOU KNOW... EVERY-THING?

HUH ...?

THEN...

YOU...

!

MAKOTO ...

...HAD ONE OF THE SOULS WE CALL A "THANATOLITH"— A DEATH STONE.

CLICK

YES.

SO NONE OF THIS WILL INTERFERE WITH MY PLAN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

...HE FOLLOWED ITS PLAN EXACTLY.

MAKOTO NEVER WAS A GOOD SWIMMER. BUT HE JUST...

...LISTENED TO HIS SOUL...

YES.

IT WAS MY JOB TO RESCUE SOULS, SO MAYBE IT WAS DESTINY ...

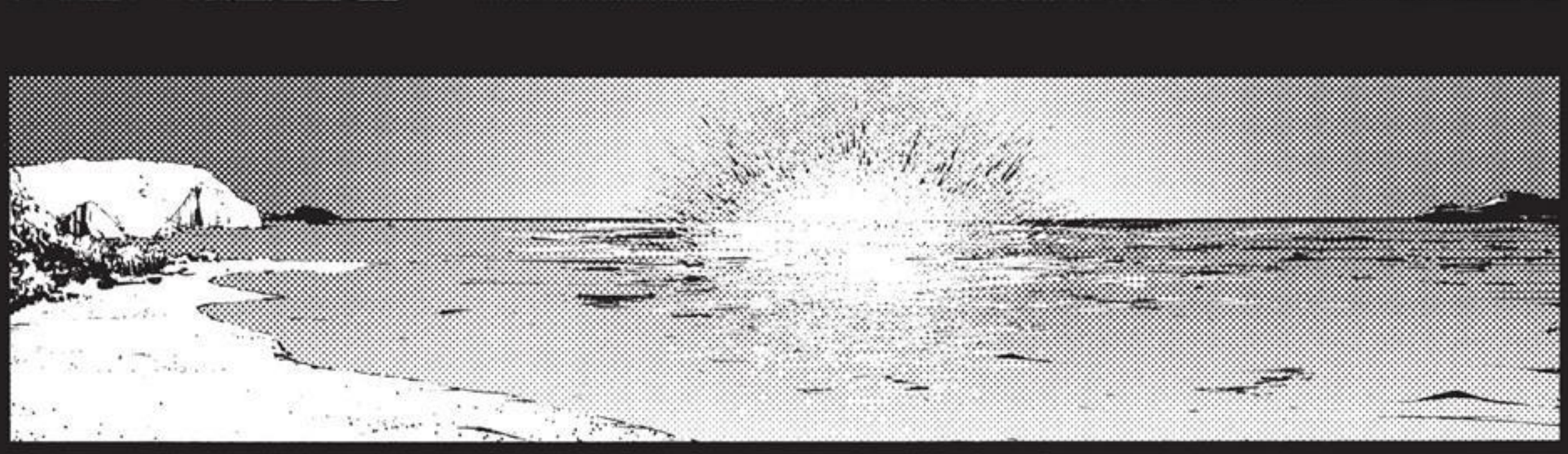
...THAT MY CHILD WOULD HAVE A STONE THAT WOULD BE MOTHER TO COUNTLESS NEW SOULS.

A THANATOLITH ?!

YOU MEAN A SOUL THAT HAS REACHED FULL MATURITY AND COME TO THE END OF ITS REBIRTH CYCLE?




HE GAVE HIS BODY TO THE SEA.
THERE WAS NO FIGHTING IT.





THEN, A FIREWORKS DISPLAY THAT ONLY COMES ONCE IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

AS A CLEANER, IT WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I COULD HOPE TO SEE. BUT AS A MOTHER, IT WAS THE WORST.

...ALL I COULD DO WAS DONATE HIS SOULLESS BODY FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

SIGN: Momose Funeral

...I EXPERIENCED MAKOTO-KUN'S FUNERAL VICARIOUSLY.

I...

...LOOKED AT HIS FRIEND'S MEMORIES.

...OH.

THEN YOU FELT THE REALITY ...

...OF MAKOTO'S DEATH.

BUT THEN...

...IT LOOKS LIKE THAT BODY WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER, EITHER.

!

HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED? ...HE LEAVES SAND EVERY-WHERE HE GOES.

HIS CLEANER STONE IS CRUMBLING ...

...! NO...!

...WHO IS HE?

I HOPED I COULD AT LEAST KEEP HIS BODY HERE.

...BUT IT WAS USELESS TO FIGHT IT.

YOU KNEW IT WAS ALMOST TIME TO DISPOSE OF HIM.

...NATURE IS REJECT-ING HIS EXISTENCE, THAT'S ALL.

IT'S FATE. THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

ALL WE CAN DO IS ACCEPT IT. THAT GOES FOR YOU AS WELL.

JANGLE...

JUST ACCEPT THAT IT'S THE PROPER ORDER OF THINGS.


SHOOT

KRIK

...?!

KRIK

ZLRR

OH.

HEY... SAKURAI.

GRAB

...!

WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING ?!

I DON'T REALLY NEED IT ANY-MORE.

...!

GH GH

WELL, YOU SEE...

I THOUGHT I'D PULL MY STONE OUT.

I FINALLY KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO WANT TO DIE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM.

IF MAKOTO IS DEAD,

THEN I SHOULD DIE TOO.

THAT'S THE LAW OF NATURE.

KRGH...

...Huff.

GH GH

...Huff...

CRUMBLE...

KRGH

SNAP

ZH...

ZH!

...NO.

!!

WHAM

...AND I'M SAYING DON'T!

I JUST ...

I WANT TO DIE, OKAY!

NO! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!

GNN GNN

GRAB

STOP IT...

YOU... ARE AMANO-KUN !!

...AND WHO IS THAT ?!

AND I DON'T WANT IT!

IT'S A ZOMBIE NAME!

JUST A FAKE MAKOTO!

BUT I...

DAMN IT...

Huff.

...Huff...

...!

Huff.

I GAVE MY PER-MISSION!

I'VE DEFINITELY GIVEN MY PERMISSION, SO WHY...

DAMN IT... WHY CAN'T I TAKE IT OUT?!

DAMN...

IT...

SWAY...

...!

THUD

...AMANO-KUN?!

"ALL WE CAN DO IS ACCEPT IT."

"THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO."

AMA...

AMANO-KUN!

?!

JANGLE

EXCUSE ME, MOMOSE-SAN!

MAY I BORROW THE SCOOTER OUT FRONT ?!

huff huff

UM, WELL ...

I JUST CAN'T DO IT.

WHAT ?

チャリ JINGLE

...?

SURE, BUT...

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WHAT ARE YOU ...?

VAFO

THE LAWS OF NATURE ...

...CAN EAT SHIT!

VROOM!

Is there such a thing as a soul?

Since time immemorial, there have been countless stories about the soul. This is probably because thinking about the soul is the same as thinking about being human. In the broadest sense, all stories may be thematically divided into two categories: “what is a human?” and “what is the world?” Medical science and physics have different methods, but their goal is the same. The sciences don’t use the word “soul” because they have no way to observe it, so we can’t definitively state that the soul exists. Even so, reading the news about terminal care, the issue of brain death, robotic technology, AI, etc., I get the feeling that cutting-edge science is coming close to understanding that subject.

I don't think there's ever been a correct answer, now or in the past, to the question of "what is a soul?", but since I started *Livingstone* based on that theme, I think this manga should present a conclusion that makes sense for this story. I thank all you readers who have considered this question with me. Now then, where is our soulless Amano-kun headed?

Tomohiro Maekawa

From Niigata prefecture.

A writer and producer who writes slice of life stories that take place in supernatural settings. He has a wide range of work, from *Super Kabuki II* with Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, to modern theatre written in collaboration with Yukio Ninagawa.

Chairman of the Ikiume theatre troupe, his *Taiyou [The Sun]* won the grand prize in the Yomiuri Drama Awards.

Final Chapter My Home Town

...!

DON'T TELL ME HE DID THIS TO HIMSELF...

HE... WANTS TO DIE ?!

UFO

...AT A TIME LIKE THIS ?!

WHERE WOULD SAKURAI-SAN GO...

COME ON...

STAY WITH ME.

AMANO-KUN!

DON'T DIE!

I MEAN ...

I'M TIRED OF THIS.

...I HAVE NOTHING.

KRSH...

KRSH...

ZSHH...

NOTHING.

!

CRASH

CLOSE

WHAT IS IT TO LIVE ?

WHAT IS IT TO DIE ?

WHAT IS A SOUL ?


ZETTO


ZETTO

...HAVE NOTHING.

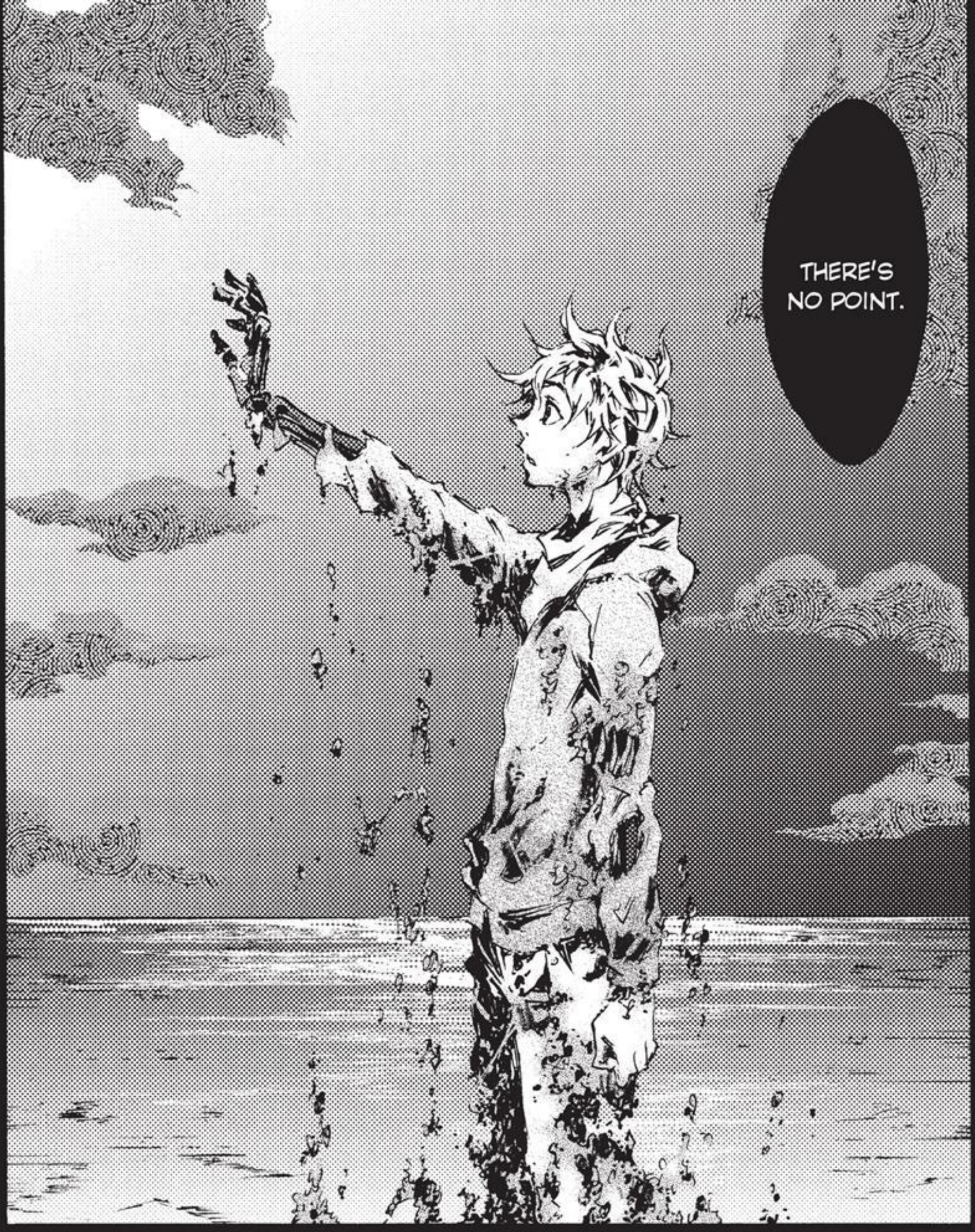
I...

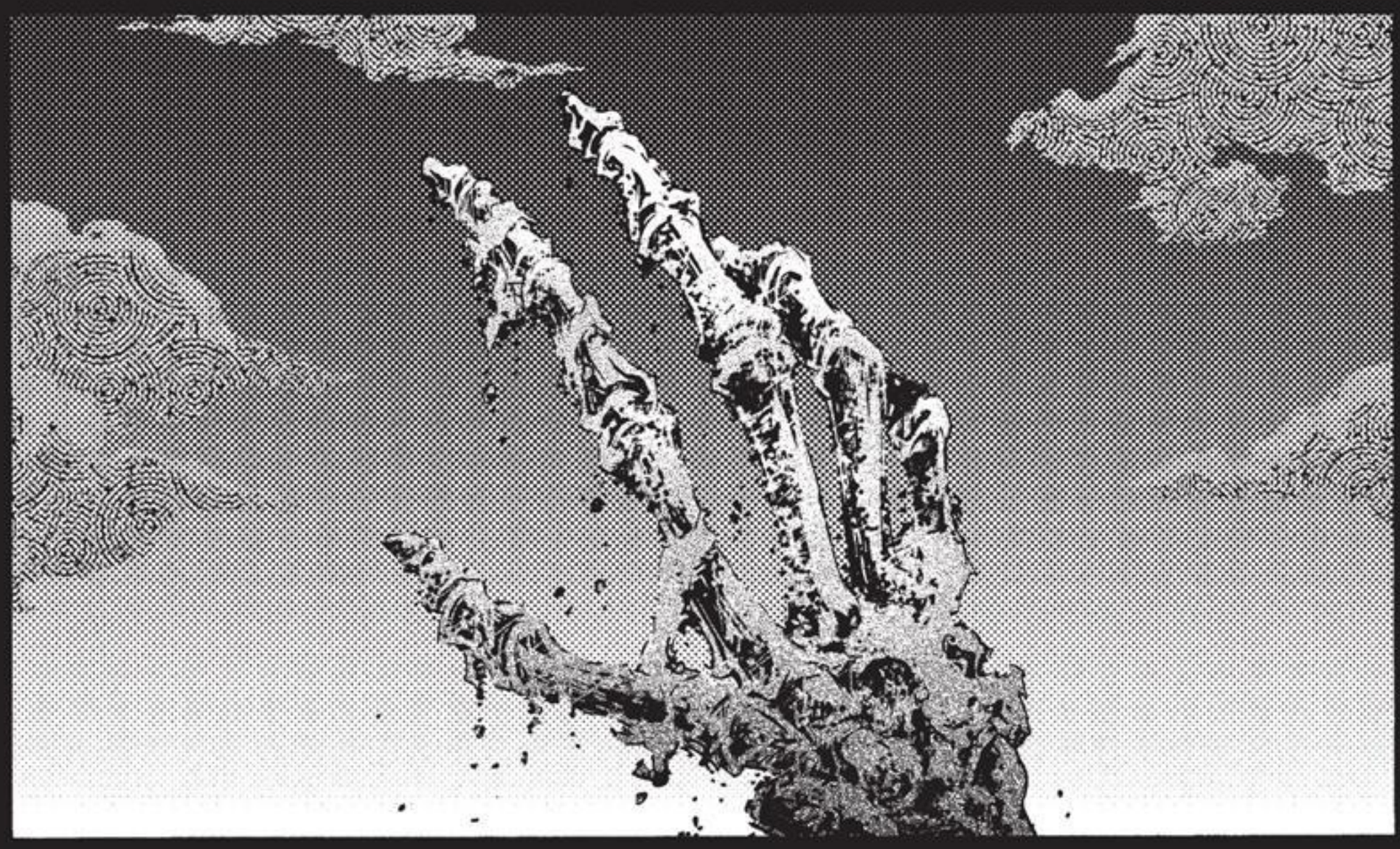
KRSH...

NOTHING.

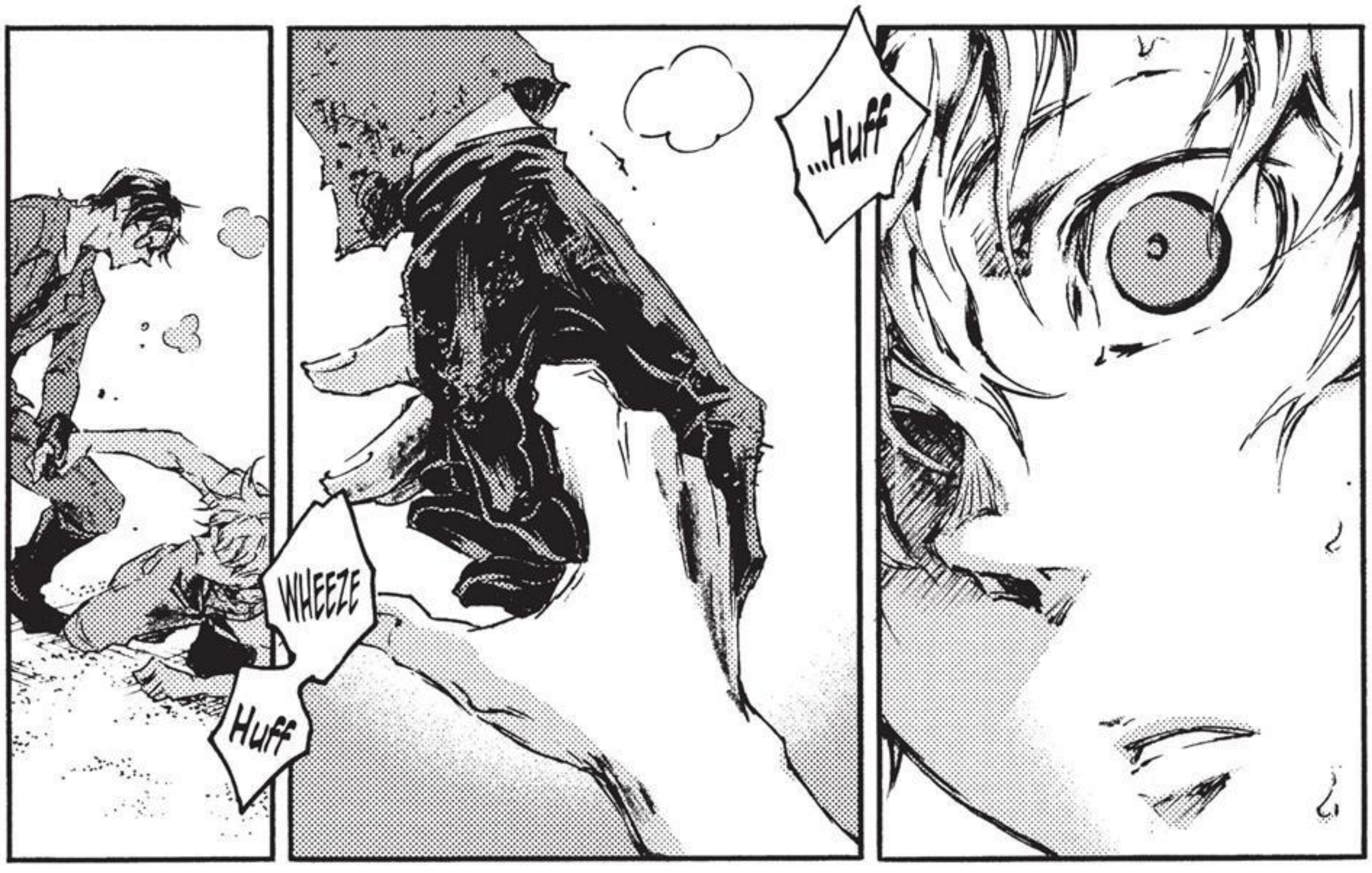
NOT A SINGLE THING.

NOT A THING.


THERE'S
NO POINT.






...Huff
WHEEZE
Huff

YOU NEED A DOCTOR.

JUST A... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU! YOU'RE HURT!

OH!

I'M SORRY. I RUINED YOUR SCOOTER.

I'LL PAY YOU BACK! With a loan.

WHAT...

...ARE YOU SO DESPER-ATE ABOUT ?

LET GO OF ME!

I WANT TO D—

YOU DON'T HAVE PER-MISSION.

AMANO-KUN!

HEY, COME ON! PULL YOUR-SELF TOGE-THER!

GET OVER YOUR STUPID ADOLES-CENT MOOD SWINGS !!

"WHY ARE WE ALIVE" ?

I DON'T KNOW EITHER! NOBODY DOES !

I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE, SO YOU CAN'T!

PEOPLE AREN'T BORN ALONE— WE CAN'T LIVE ALONE, AND WE SHOULDN'T GO OFF DYING ALONE!

WE'VE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE TOGETHER, RIGHT?!

I GOT YOUR REASON TO LIVE RIGHT HERE!

SO DON'T DIE, AMANO-KUN!

?!

WHUMP


PlayStanBOX
PlayStanBOX
PlayStanBOX
Highend machine
PlayStanBOX






...HUH?

...YOU LEFT YOUR PARTNER... AS HE WAS DYING... TO...

DON'T TELL ME YOU LEFT... TO BUY THIS?

SAKURAI-SAN... YOU...

HM?

AND THEY DO SAY THAT LIFE IS JUST KILLING TIME UNTIL DEATH...

WELL, UM, AMANO-KUN LIKES VIDEO GAMES.

HUH ...?

IS THAT WRONG ?

I PAID FOR IT MYSELF !

GRAH

BESIDES, UM...

...PFFT.

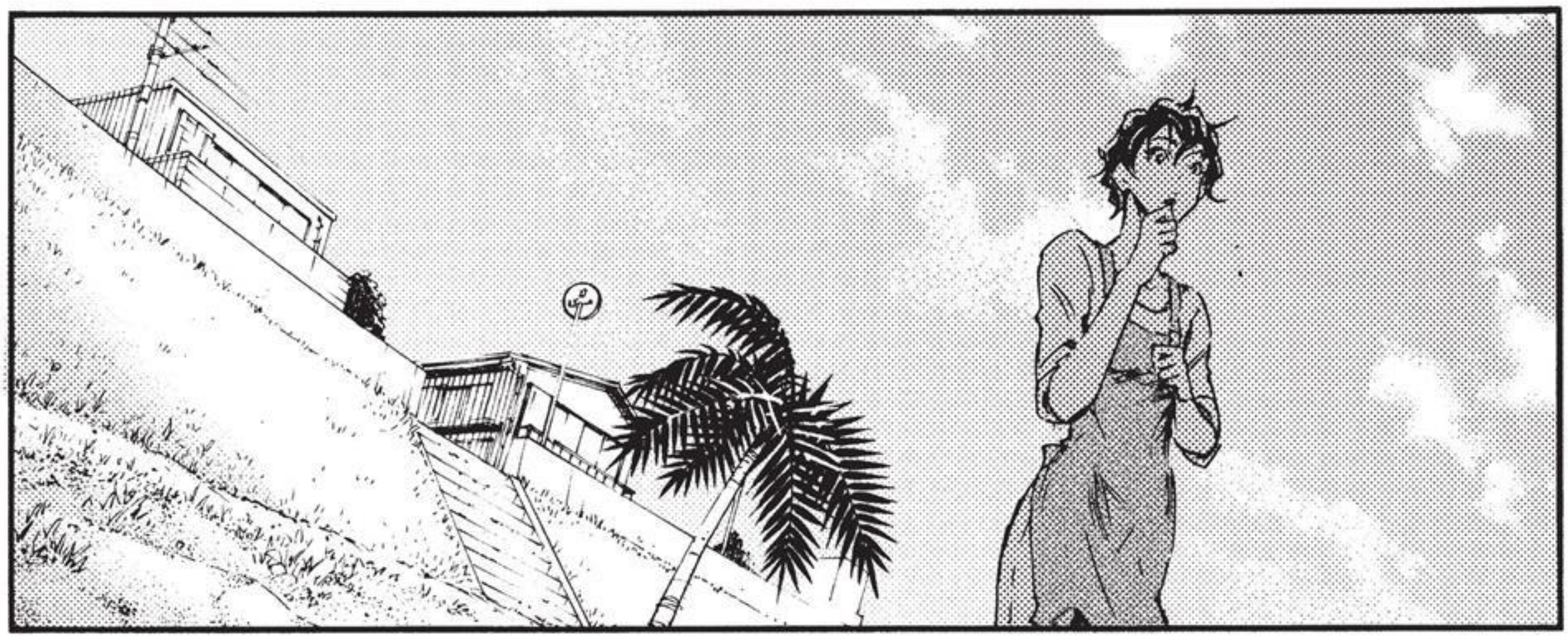
HA HA HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

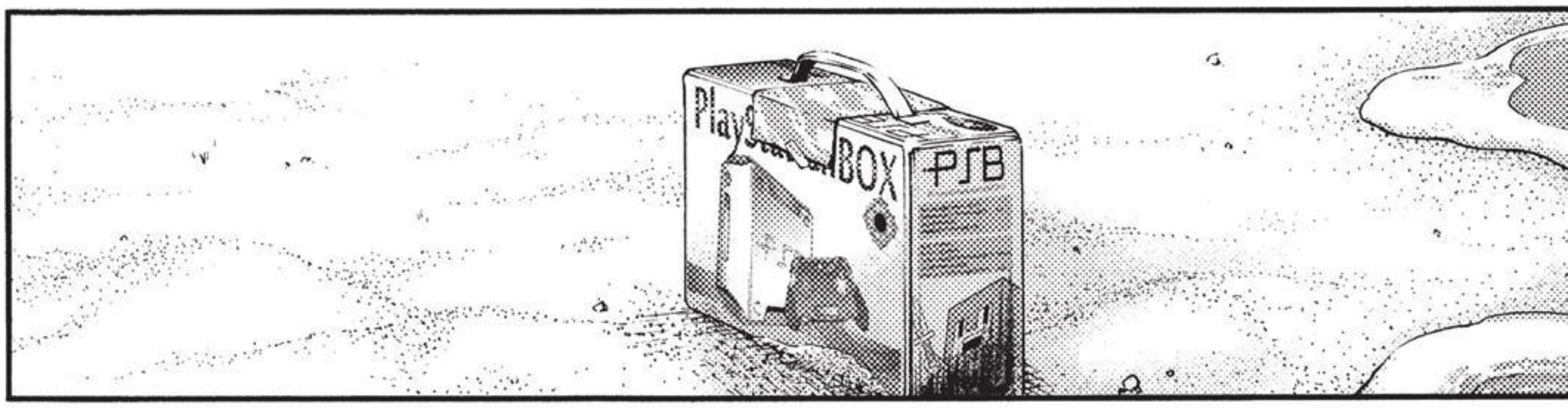
pfft HA HA HA HA HA!

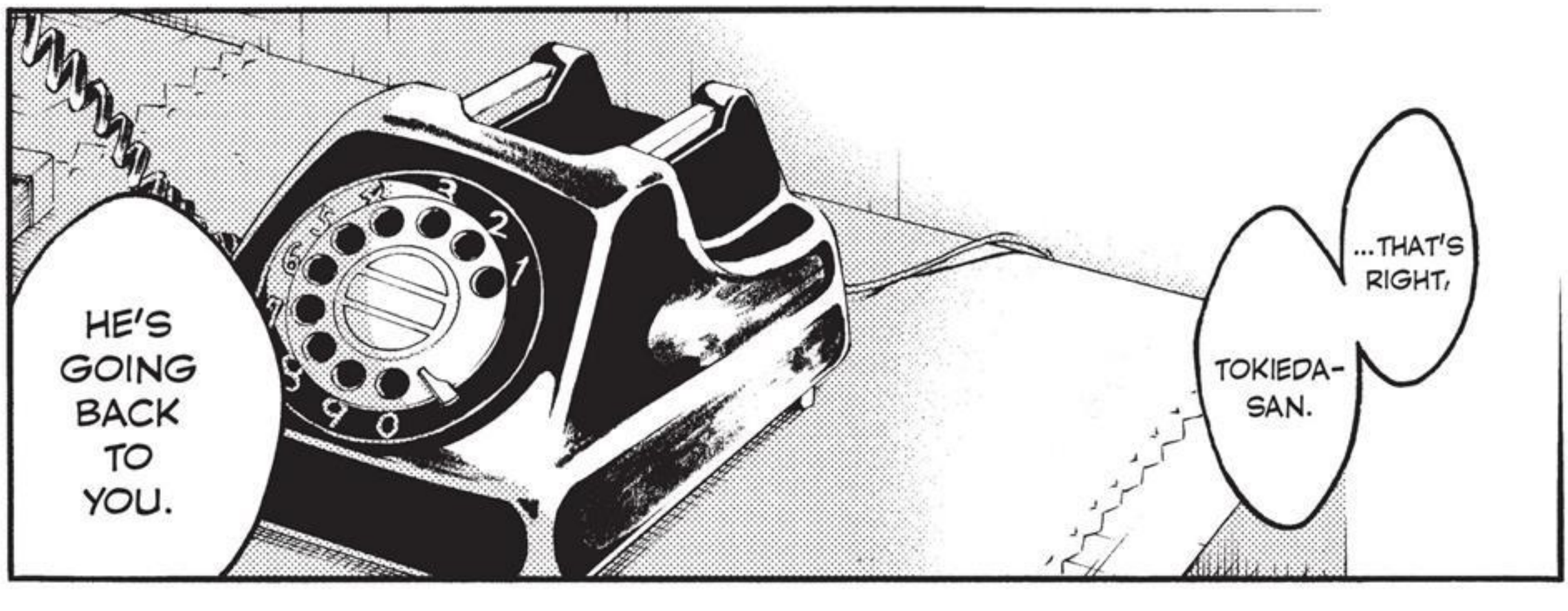
ARE YOU STUPID, SAKURAI ?!


P1B
P1B P1B




PlayBOX
PLAYBOX


PlayBOX


HE'S GOING BACK TO YOU.
...THAT'S RIGHT, TOKIEDA-SAN.

YOU KNOW ...

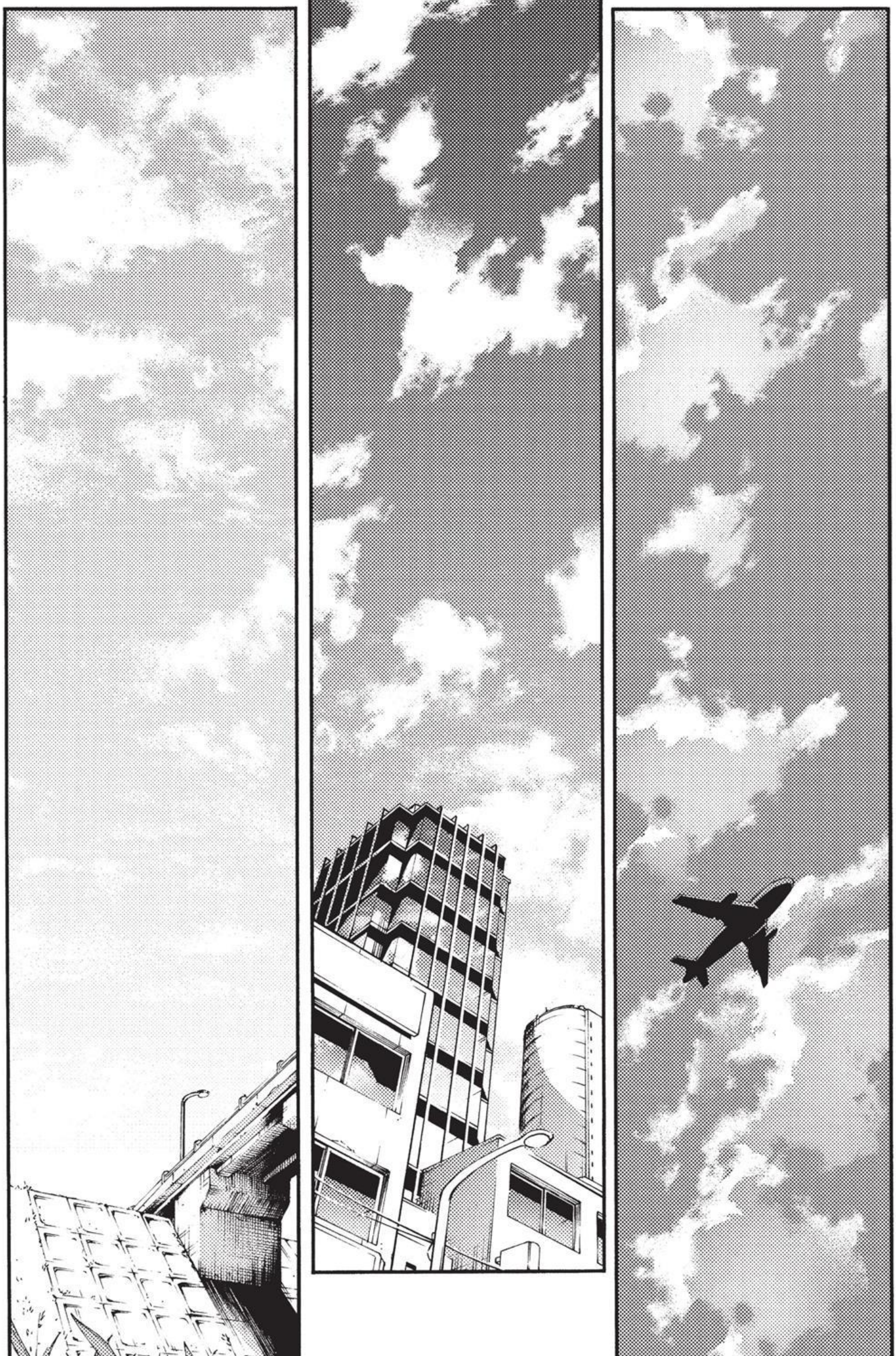
HE LAUGHED.

BUT NOT MAKOTO, AMANO-KUN.

HE *LAUGHED.*

HE HAS...

...A GOOD HOME.



AMANO-KUN'S QUEST CAME TO AN END.

HIS FIRST AND HIS LAST JOURNEY.

CRACKLE CRACKLE

SIZZLE

MUNCH MUNCH

OH!

WEL-COME BACK!

BOTTLE: Tea

...

WHAT ARE ALL YOU GUYS DOING HERE?

A barbeque?

AND IN THAT CASE, YOUR FAMILY HAS TO COME OUT TO WELCOME YOU.

ALSO ...

THEY SAY THAT THE JOURNEY DOESN'T END UNTIL YOU'RE BACK AT HOME.

...DAD TOLD US EVERY-THING.

ALL ABOUT YOU, AMANO-KUN.

...

...BUT NOT MAKOTO MOMOSE'S FAMILY.

AMANO-KUN'S FAMILY.

UHHH...

WELCOME BACK.

...I GUESS YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT.

WANT SOME?

IT'S MY SPECIAL STEWED CARP SOUP DRESSED WITH JELLYFISH ICE CREAM.

Meat!

Meeeat!

THEY'RE ONLY HERE FOR THE FOOD.

OH, DON'T SAY THAT.

I will go buy some, ma'am.

Why isn't there any wine?!

DU' DUN

PHFFAUGH

GULP

UH!

U DON'T—

THE ANSWER IS NO.

AMANO ...

SO YOU'VE LEARNED HOW TO MAKE THAT FACE, TOO, EH?

IS LEARNING HOW TO TASTE THINGS *SUPPOSED* TO BE TORTURE ?!

BLECH

BLECH

WHAT IS THIS?! IT'S FREAKING DISGUST-ING!

WAH HA HA HA!

SIIIGH

HUH?

I'M HOME.

...YEAH.


ZSHHH

...?!

WHY ?!

AMANO-KUN ?!

KRSH...

THIS...

...IS THE LAW OF NATURE.

...FIGURES.

?!

...

WHY DOES HE HAVE TO DIE TWICE ?!

WHY ?!

SO ONCE HE BECOMES HUMAN, HE'S DISPOSED OF?!

...WHY ?! COME ON!

I MEAN, HEY...

shoo shoo

WHA— ?!

I FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT. I KNOW WHY I COULDN'T PULL MY PSYCHOLITH OUT.

...I DON'T WANNA DIE LOOKING AT YOUR DIRTY MUG.

KRSH...

IT'S LIKE...

BACK THEN, I HADN'T GIVEN MY PERMISSION AFTER ALL.

SO I DON'T THINK IT'S SO BAD.

IT'S NOT THAT I'M DYING TWICE.

I WANTED TO LIVE AS ME— AS AMANO.

IT'S THAT I LIVED TWICE.

...OH.

ZSHU

gyoo.

gyoo.

BUT...

...HE DIED AS ONE OF THE LIVING.

...EX-ACTLY.

AMANO IS ONE OF THE DEAD.

AMANO-KUN ...

BUT ALL HE DID WAS TRY TO LIVE...

BWAH

SNAP

KA-POP

...TOKIEDA-SAN.

CLATTER

CLATTER

THESE ARE HIS REMAINS... PROOF THAT AMANO-KUN EXISTED.

THAT MAKES IT...

...A FINE PSYCHOLITH, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

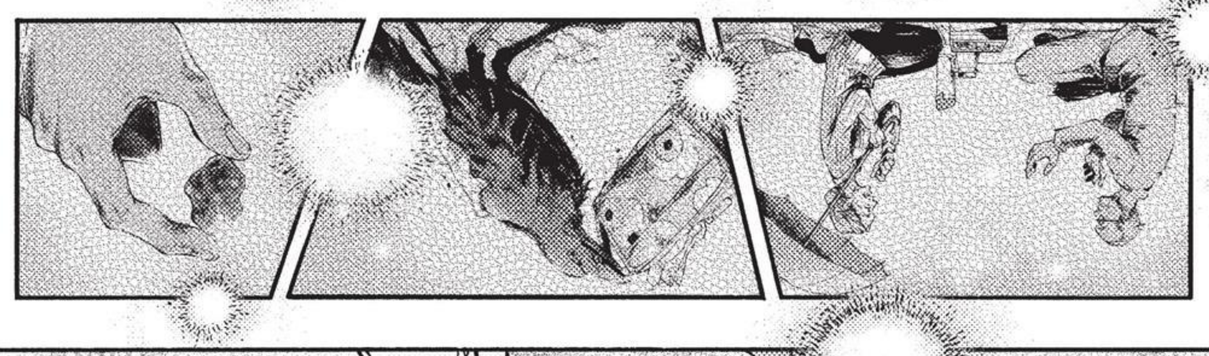
IN MEMORIAM.

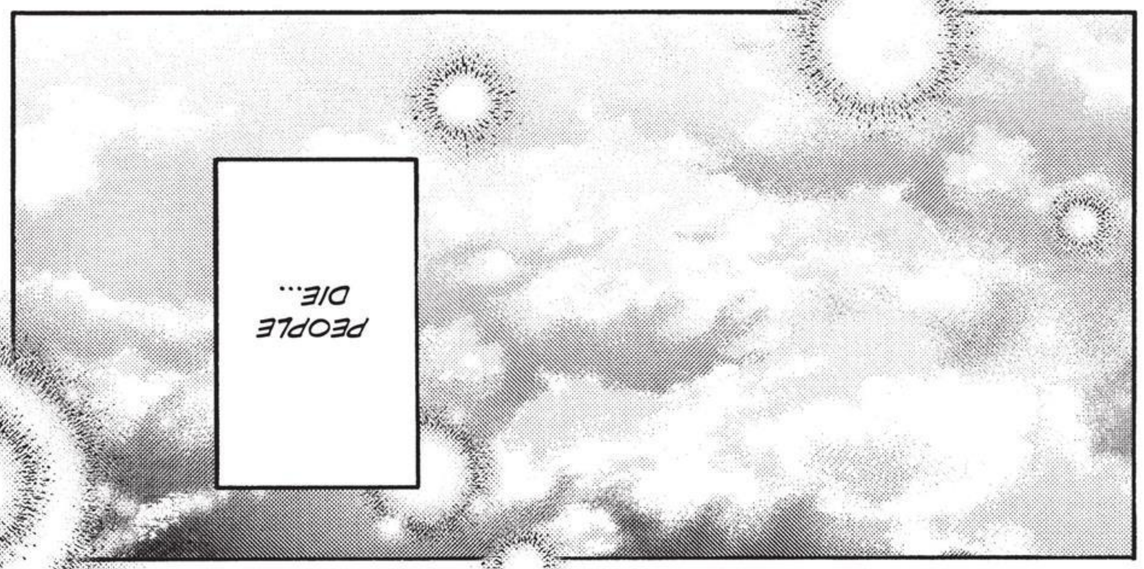
...YEAH.

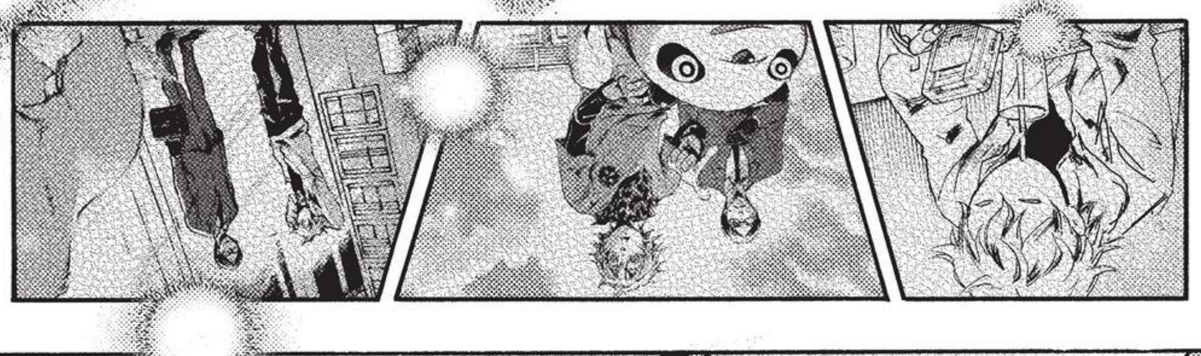
GO ON, READ IT.

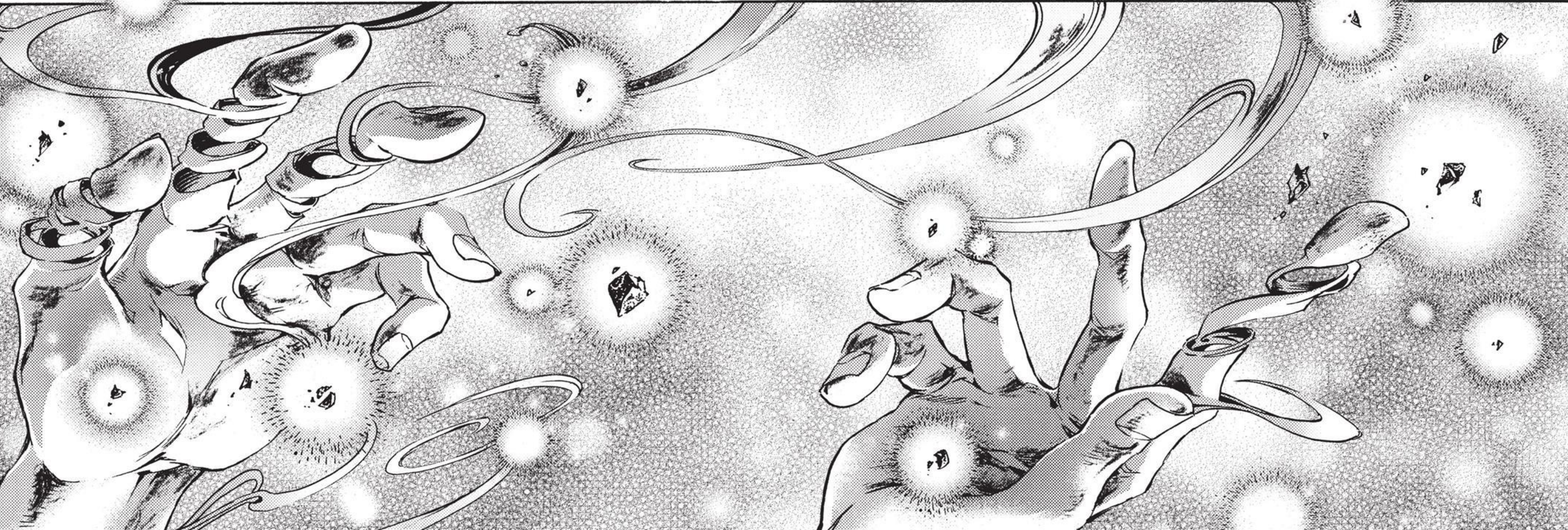
twip


...BECAUSE THEY LIVE.




PEOPLE DIE...





THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT I ACCELERATED AMANO-KUN'S DISPOSAL.

BUT HIS SOUL...

...SHOWS ITSELF IN THE TIME HE SPENT HERE.

WILL THEY REMAIN AS ONE OF THE DEAD ?

OR WILL THEY MOVE ON AS ONE OF THE LIVING?

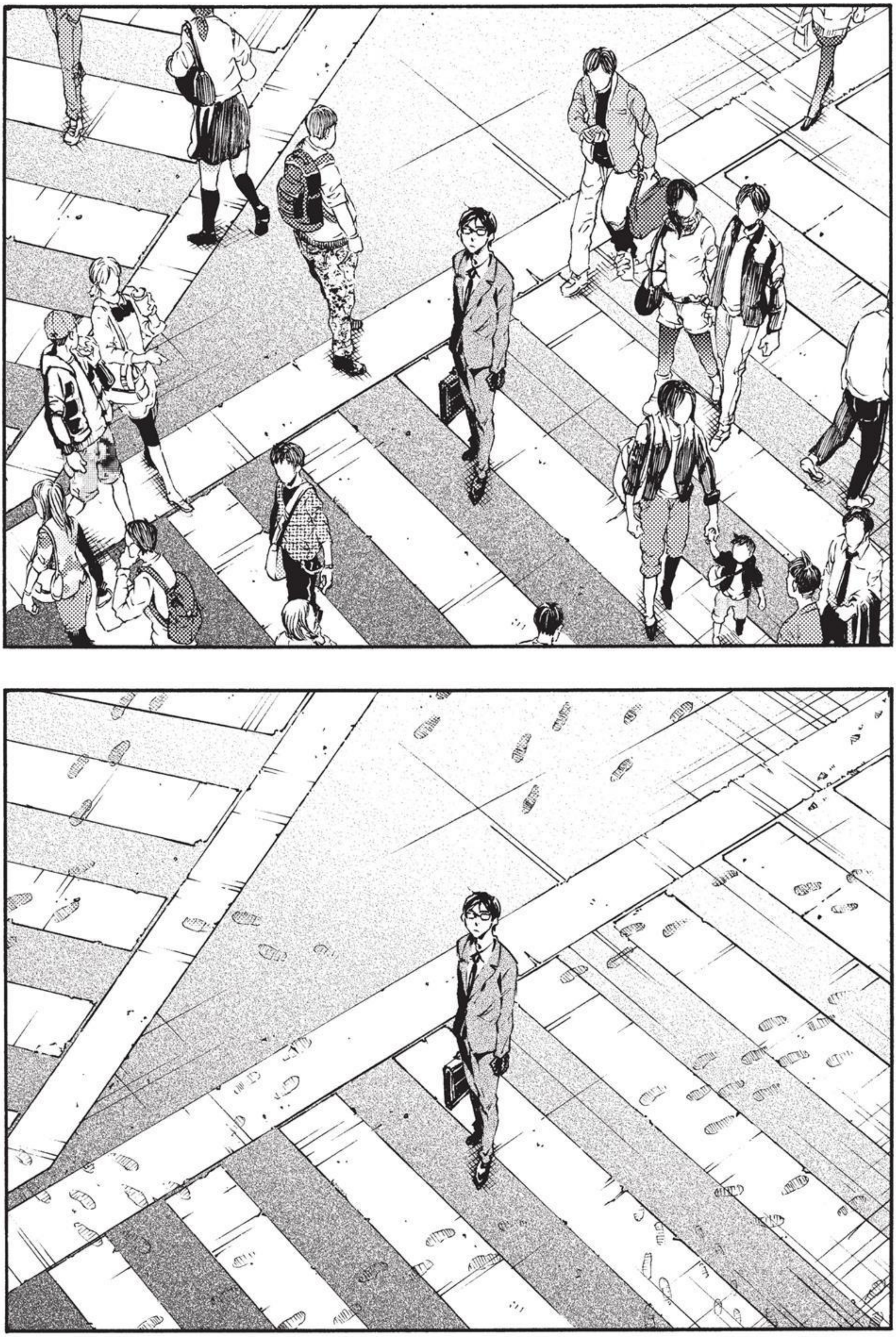
AMANO-KUN CHOSE TO LIVE.

IT'S WITHIN THE WILL TO LIVE THAT THE SOUL GROWS.

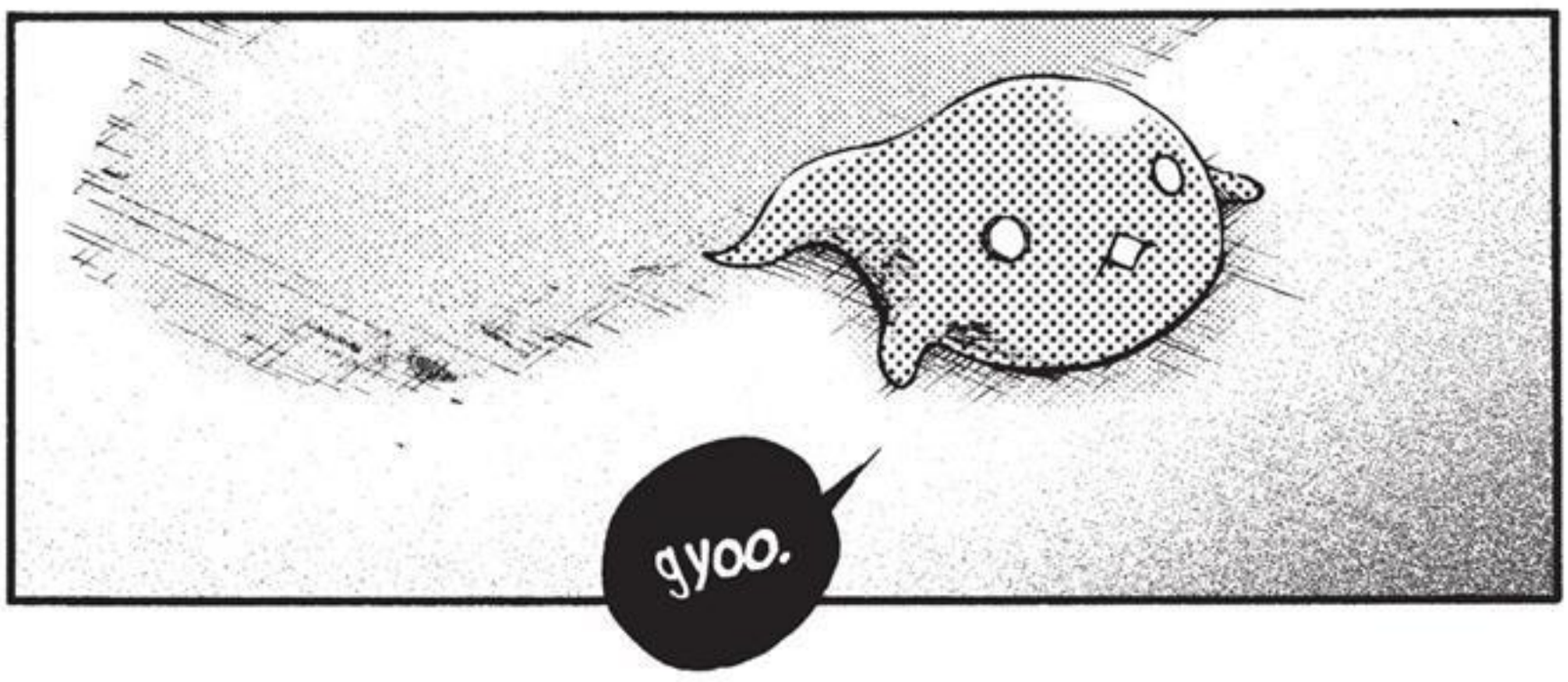
AMANO-KUN SHOWED ME THAT.

EVEN IF MOST OF OUR LIFE IS PLANNED ...

I DON'T THINK OF THIS FLESH AS JUST A VEHICLE FOR MY SOUL.



...WE ARE FREE.


gyoo.



I want to thank everyone, starting with Kazuma Kondō who did art and consultation with me, my art staff, the designer Kawase-san, all my editors through the years, and most of all, Maekawa-san who wrote the original story. I pray that all of you who read this will be free.

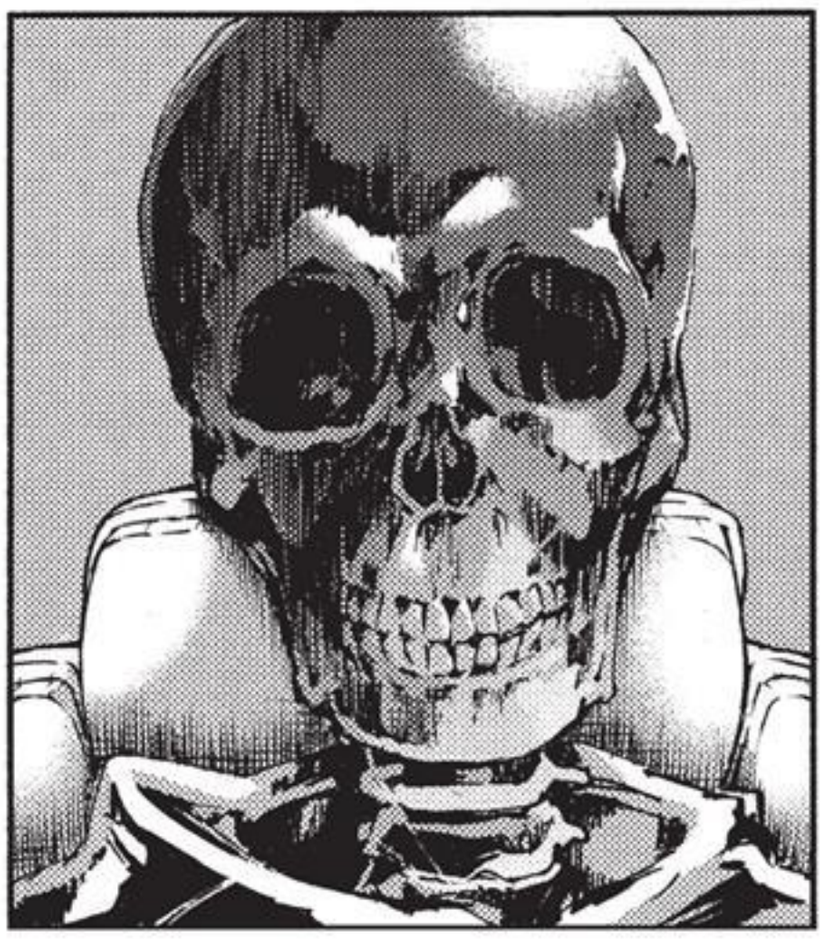
Jinsei Kataoka
April 2015

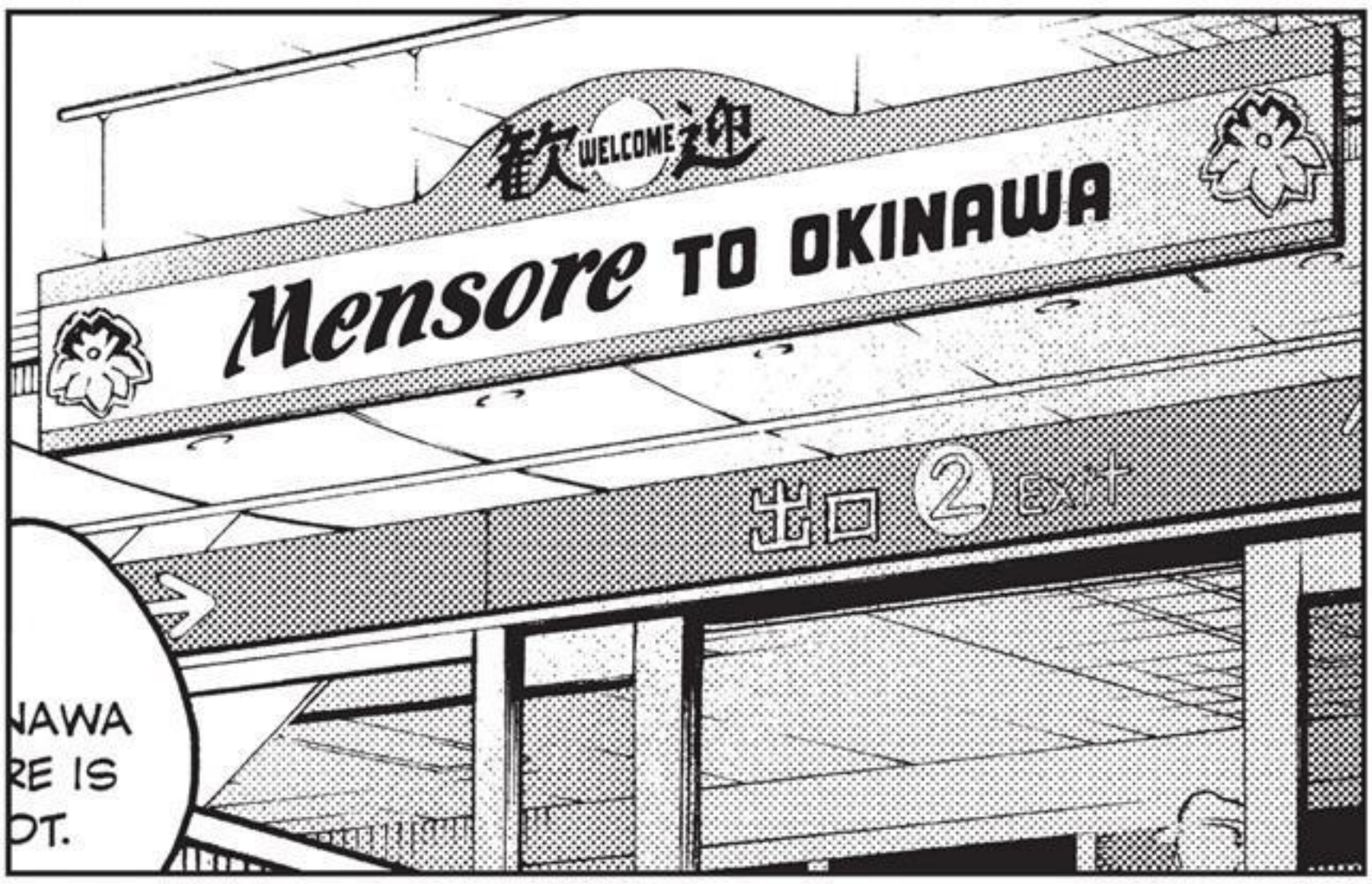
Thank you for staying with us all this time.



TRANSLATION NOTES







MENSORE TO OKINAWA

page 10

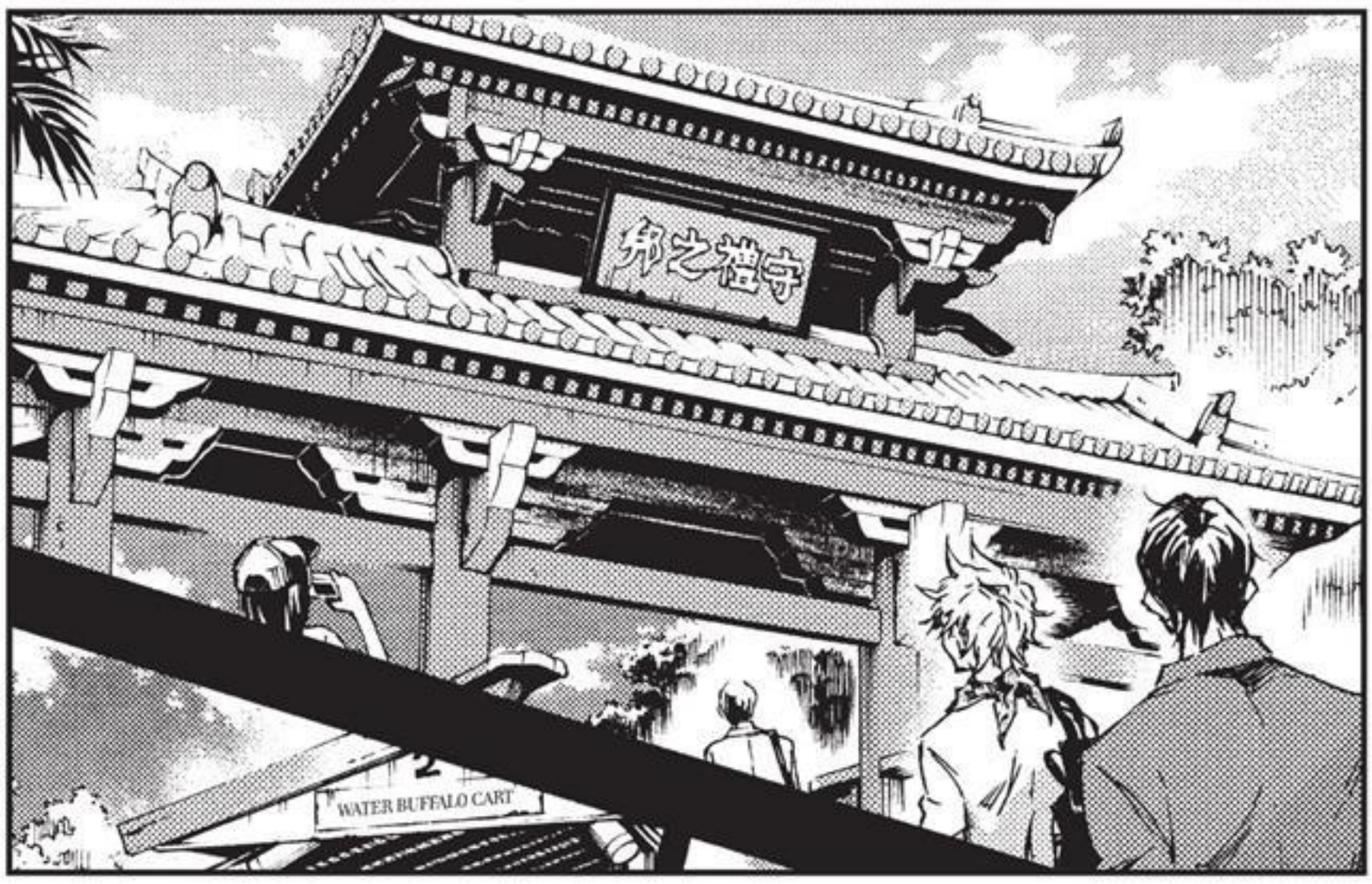
Although Okinawa is a part of Japan now, it was originally part of the Ryukyu Kingdom and as such had its own language. Much of that language is still part of what is called the Okinawan dialect. The reader can guess from the sign that *mensore* (men-SO-ray) means "welcome".



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO OKINAWA

page 11

This *Rurupu* travel guide is the *Livingstone* version of the *Rurubu* series of travel guides. On the cover is a creature from Okinawan folklore saying, "*hai-sai,*" which is Okinawan for, "Hey, how's it going?" "*hai-sai*" is the masculine form of the word; a woman would say, "*hai-tai.*"



OKINAWA SIGHTSEEING TOUR

page 12

Although Tokieda specifically told Sakurai that this was not a vacation, he and Amano have become tourists, visiting famous Okinawan places in an attempt to find Amano's heritage. The first stop is Shureimon, a gate that was built nearly 500 years ago, back when Okinawa belonged to the Ryukyu Kingdom. Next, they visit the Himeyuri Monument, a tribute to the Himeyuri students, or Lily Corps, who were students and teachers from women's high schools in Okinawa that formed a nursing unit for the Japanese Army during the Battle of Okinawa. After a tour of Taketomi village via water buffalo-drawn carriage, they head off to Pineapple Park in Nago. Then it's off to the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium, one of the largest aquariums in the world, boasting a tank that houses manta rays and whale sharks. Of course, no one can go to Okinawa without seeing plenty of *shisa*, a Ryukyuan mythological creature that wards off evil spirits, much like the gargoyles of Europe. Finally, they visited Ryukyu Mura Village, where they went to the Habu Center to see the indigenous *habu* pit vipers.



IDENTITY CRISIS

page 13

The Japanese that was used here is actually something called *chūnibyō* (literally, "second year of junior high illness"). Though a sort of identity crisis, it's better identified as the self-conscious stage of puberty, hence its name indicating an illness that takes place in the second year of junior high school (typically ages 13-14). This is not a real illness, but more of a slang term to describe a set of behaviors that occur in teenagers around this time, and in some cases, adults who act like teenagers. The main symptoms are related to delusional thoughts that make the afflicted believe that they are special in some way, such as thinking that they are an alien or have special powers. This could also lead to questions of identity and in turn, an identity crisis.



TACO RICE AND AWAMORI

page 26

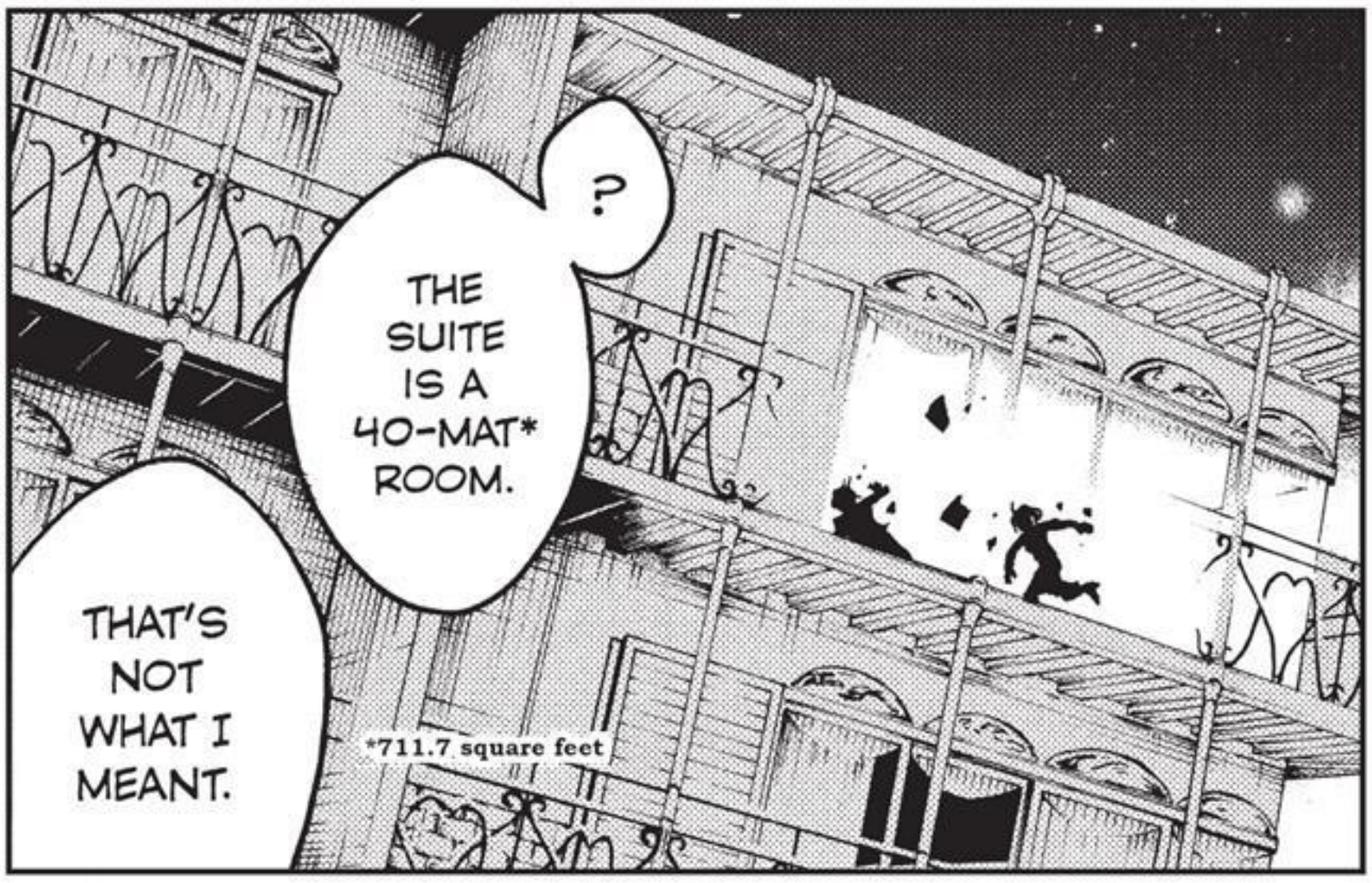
Both of these are local specialties of Okinawa. Taco rice, as one might expect, is taco-seasoned ground beef on rice, often served with such taco regulars as lettuce, tomato, and shredded cheese. *Awamori* is a distilled liquor made from long-grained Indica rice.



REMOVING SOUL DATA

page 55

Though Azusa later explains what's happening in this scene, some of the details may have been lost on those who are unable to read Japanese. Soga's soul has been opened up and perused like a book—a book that seemingly contains every single piece of information from his life. The Japanese text included reads like a very detailed diary with things like, "…restaurant, drinks beverage, 14-minute break, rides motorized bicycle along Route 58." And in the second panel featuring this "book" it details the scene that just happened, with things like, "…sandal strap breaks, trips into park rail, bumps into old man walking dog, causing him to let go of leash, dog bites him on wrist…"



THE 40-MAT SUITE

page 73

In Japan, the standard measure of floor space is done in *tatami* mats—a type of straw mat that is the standard flooring in traditional Japanese-style rooms. It's a rectangular mat which is twice as long as it is wide, and one is about 17.8 square feet in area.



"MISTER?"

page 104

As Amano and Sakurai get closer to Amano's roots, his personality begins to change. Normally, Amano refers to himself using the first-person pronoun *ore*, which means "I" but is a very casual way to say it. But here, he uses the more polite *boku*, which also means "I." Someone who usually uses *ore* will generally switch to *boku* if he wants to show respect to the person he is speaking to, but since Amano has never showed respect to anyone, Sakurai can't help but wonder about the change. Since both words translate to "I," translators have to get creative when replicating this change. In this case, it's possible that Amano's body remembered using *boku* as a child, so the translators chose to have him call their driver "mister," as a childlike way of showing respect.



AMANO'S PSYCHOLITH

page 183

The word that Sakurai used for "remains", which he then defined as "proof of existence," is *konseki*. Written another way, the word *konseki* is also the Japanese word for "psycholith." In other words, by being a *konseki* (remains), the proof of Amano's existence becomes his *konseki* (psycholith)—his soul.

DON'T MISS THE MOST ACCLAIMED ACTION MANGA OF 2013!

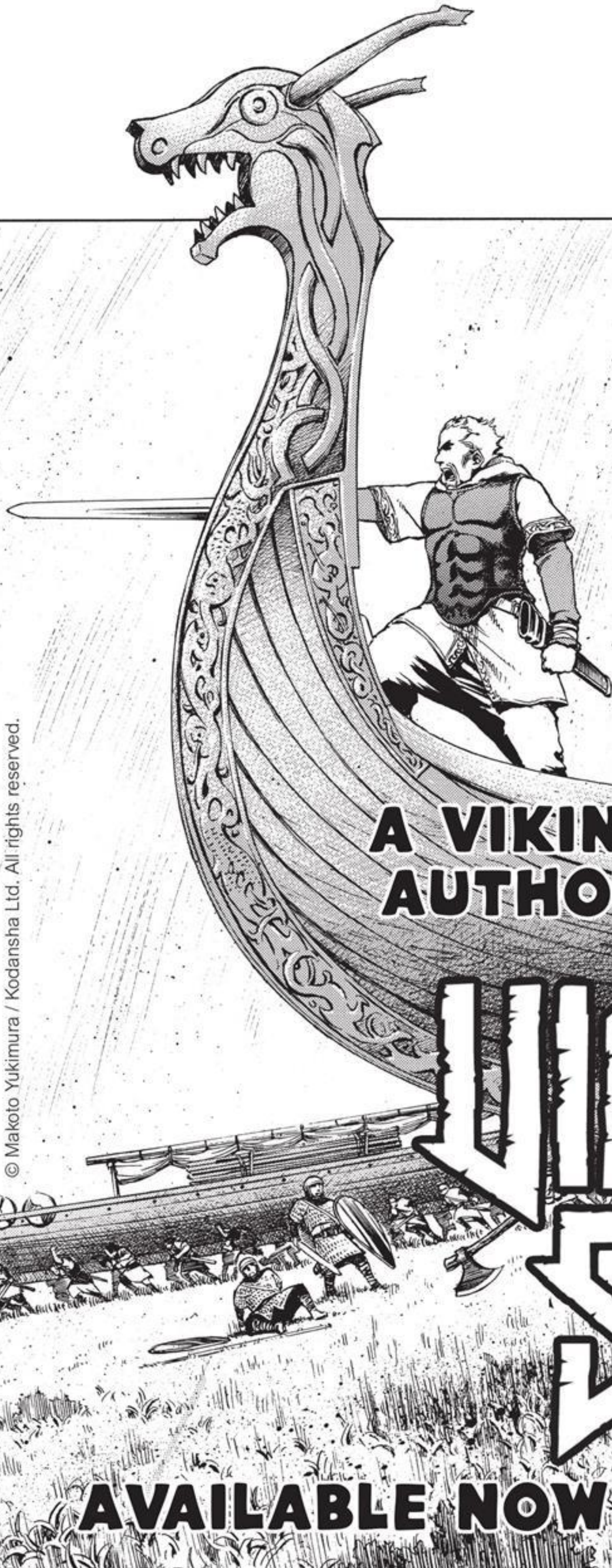
"Gripping doesn't begin to describe Vinland Saga. 5 stars." —ICv2

"Deeply engrossing... If you have any interest at all in Vikings, the Medieval period, or pirates, this is not a series you want to miss."
—Anime News Network

"The art is gorgeous, a combination of beautiful cartooning and realistic backgrounds. Yukimura is also a master of pacing, both in frenetic battle scenes and charged emotional moments."
—Faith Erin Hicks, *Friends With Boys*

"For those who love Berserk, you'll love this too... Worth the long wait."
—A Case Suitable for Treatment

"It will be impossible to stop watching this story unfold." —Japan Media Arts Awards jury



KC KODANSHA COMICS

A VIKING EPIC FROM THE AUTHOR OF "PLANETES"

VINLAND SAGA

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a silent voice

KODANSHA COMICS

"The word heartwarming was made for manga like this." –Manga Bookshelf

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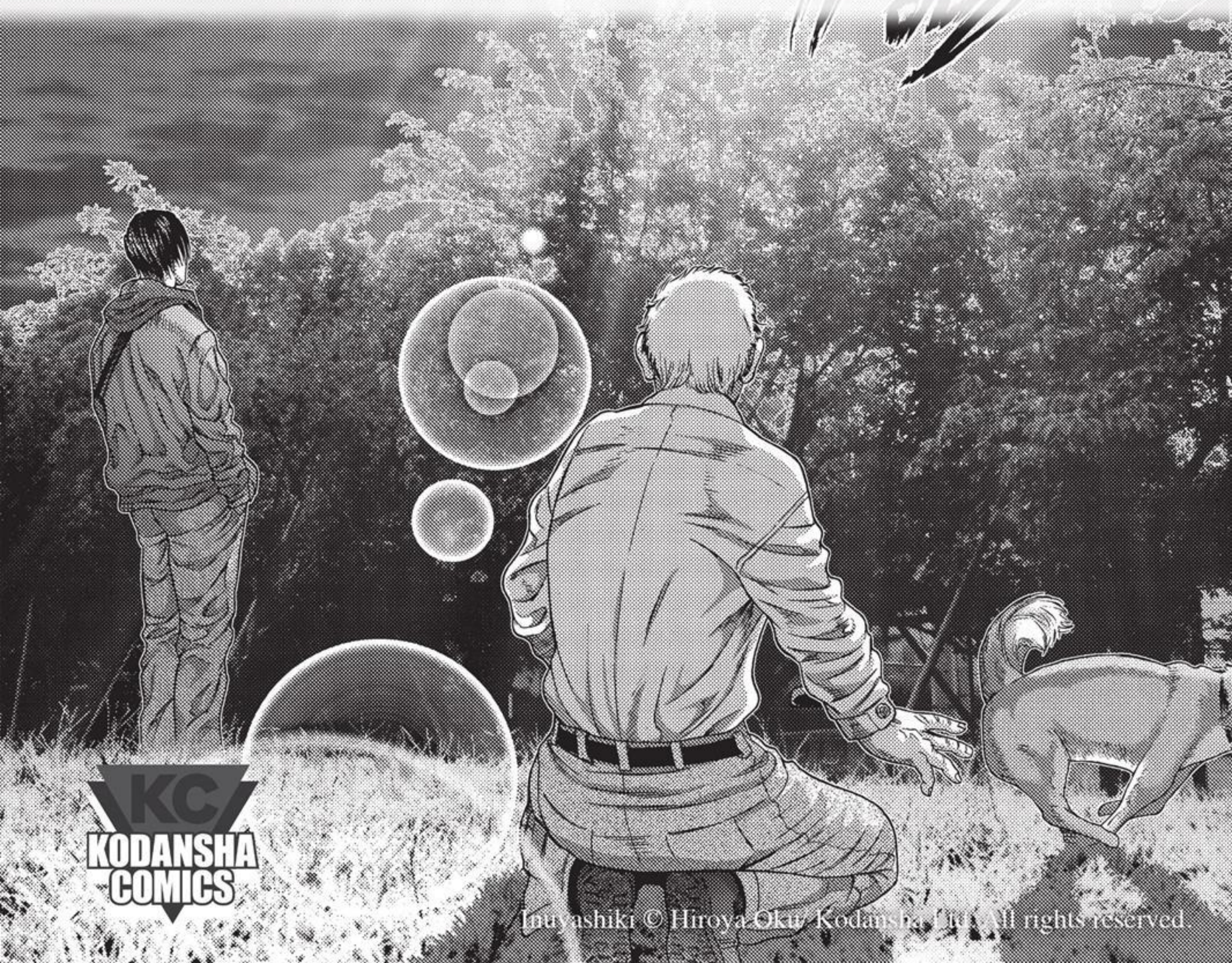
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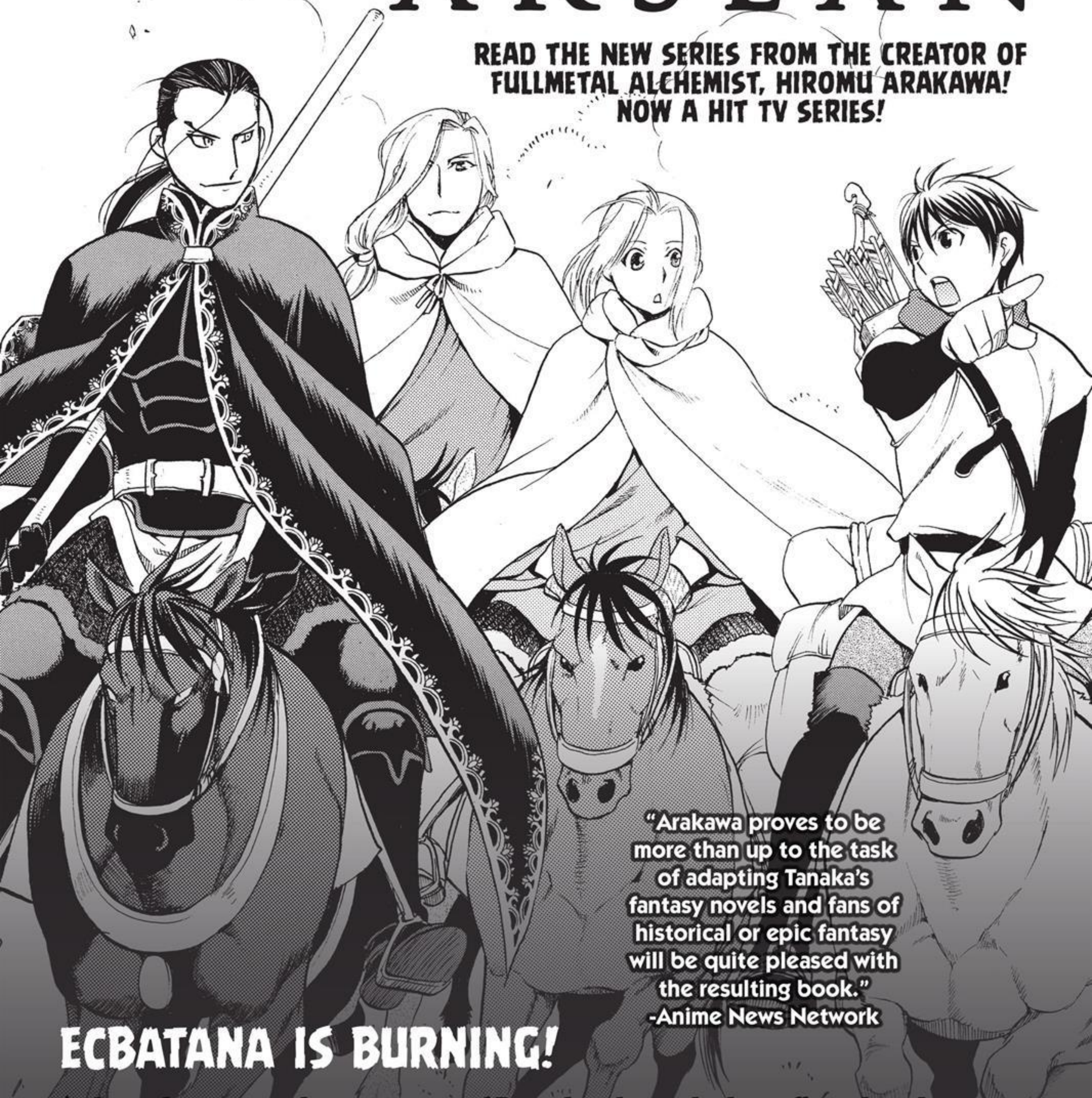
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